

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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## THE SECOND MRS. TILLOTSON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NEVER FORGOTTEN."

### BOOK I.

#### CHAPTER XVI. ROSS V. DAVIS.

THE cathedral town was extraordinarily full; the country gentlemen, who came in crowds, used the well-known illustration about "swinging a cat" with surprising frequency and satisfaction. The White Hart was at its wits' end to devise room for its guests, and, with an expansion to which it was well accustomed, had converted closets, store-rooms, even cupboards, into sleeping-rooms; and, with a rigid impartiality, charged the same tariff for the state bedroom and for the meanest little hutch in the garret. They were all labourers in the vineyard, and the last grand juror received the same wage as the first. For that body were "sitting," making presentments in its "rooms," arguing over roads and "cess," and such things, and were calling in "collectors," and were behaving with a fierce despotism, which, however, was harmless, and only confined to the manner. For they all felt that they were the "Jurors of Our Sovereign Lady the Queen," who had awful duties cast upon them. By-and-by they would be dealing with the cases of malefactors; and it would be surprising with what jealous caution and importance the witnesses would be interrogated.

The judges were already "in." The galleries were filled, for it was well known that the Tilneys, "those people who were always aping at grandeur," had some case coming on. At least it had reference to that "half-savage, ill-conditioned" Mr. Ross, and it was much the same thing. In the Crown Court, the faint-eyed, well-worn judge was already at work, with the faint eyes laid close to his note-book, while a rude agricultural Sikh, in a fustian-jacket and corduroy, stood up in the centre, like a living Jack-in-the-Box. He was the prisoner in the great shooting case, and the pen of Belmore Jones, who himself already scented the "point" from afar off, was racing over his foolscap, taking notes. In the other Court, Mr. Justice Buckstone had disposed of the "little case" in a conversational way, just as he would dispose of his chop behind; and leaning back with eyes

half closed, and tapping on his knuckles, was asking Mr. Cobham if he was ready to go on with that ejectment case. Cobham said he was perfectly ready, with a confidence as though he always had been, would, and ever should be ready in every case, no matter when called on. But the question, my lud, was the other side? He didn't know how his learned friend, Serjeant Ryder, felt; whether he was not taken by surprise through the rapid but satisfactory way in which his lordship had disposed of the last case.

"We had better have him in," said his lordship. Still Mr. Cobham whispers behind the back of his hand, and over his brother's shoulder, to his solicitor. The solicitor shakes his head, but turns to his neighbour, who is Ross, feverish and impatient. In a moment the heads of the two are together.

"You should settle," said Mr. Cobham, behind his hand. "Take my advice, we've no chance."

Ross drew back, looking blank. "No," he said, bluntly; "go on with your speech. You must."

"Mr. Cobham," said his lordship, with the points of his fingers neatly put, looking from side to side, and cracking his fingers faintly on his knuckles.

Presently there was a turning of faces, a rustling and a struggling, and the serjeant, labouring in, as it were, cutting a path through his fellow-creatures. *He* was ready, always was; in fact, was a little surprised it had not been taken before. Everybody being ready, a jury is sworn—a dogged, agricultural, embarrassed-looking jury—and Mr. Paget is about rising to open the pleadings. Suddenly the serjeant put his hands together, and with an oily smile of expostulation, said, "*Really*, now! The list is heavy, and unless we take our lodgings by the year——"

A little of obsequious legal hilarity greeted this humorous remark. Mr. Cobham looked round angrily at his junior, and said, "Get along, do."

Mr. Paget opened the pleadings; this was an ejectment, brought to recover possession of the lands known as Davis Mount. The defendant, Oliver Davis, pleaded, &c., "and the issues that you will have now to try," continued Mr. Paget, raising his voice, "are whether, &c.," according to the usual form.

Then Mr. Cobham, rising, put his handkerchief down on his brief before him, and placing one foot up on the seat, patting his knee now and then, a favourite attitude, proceeded to address the gentlemen of the jury.

Mr. Cobham said he would briefly show them how the case stood. It was a simple case—"one of the simplest, perhaps, that had ever come into a court of justice." It lay in a nutshell, and if they would let him "lead their minds," and if they would "go with him for a short time," they would have no difficulty at arriving at a true apprehension of the point in dispute. It was, as they had heard, a simple action of ejectment as between one man and another. Both parties were in the same station; both parties came asking equal justice at their hands—a justice, he was confident, they would obtain. For he (Mr. Cobham) had had the honour of going that circuit for many years, and of addressing faces he had the privilege of seeing there before him. His lordship, too, had come very often, and knew what the juries of that county were. Men more capable of dealing with the intricate relations that arise between man and man, there were nowhere, or men more likely to take a good common-sense view of transactions. His lordship on the bench knew them; his learned friend there knew them; they all knew them. They were now to deal with this important case, the details of which he should now proceed to lay before them.

"It would appear," as Mr. Cobham said, putting his briefs further away from him, and settling his bag and things as if he were laying breakfast, "that about the ye—ar" (Mr. Cobham lengthened out this word as, with silver glasses up, he looked for the date) "seventeen hundred and ninety-seven, that a Mr. Oliver Davis was possessed of certain estates known as the 'Moore Hall' property, valued at the time at about eighteen hundred to two thousand a year. He was an old gentleman, unmarried, and, I may say, of somewhat singular and solitary tastes. He lived by himself, and saw no company. About the year eighteen hundred and one, or so, he fell in with an old friend, who had newly come from India, where he had been engaged fighting for his king and country; a man of worth and courage; a man of honour, a gentleman, a soldier, whose name was—was Gen—er—al" (added Mr. Cobham, stooping down to refresh his memory, through the silver glasses, as to the name of the man of worth and honour), "yes, General Halton Ross—General Halton Ross. Halton Ross," said Mr. Cobham, twisting his glasses by the string, and now quite interested with the officer, "was the father of my client here."

Ross, with a painfully eager face, had been bent forward, with his fierce eyes devouring the counsel. Every one now looked at him. The heavy jury stooped over, as if to peer down into a pond. Ladies in the gallery found him out at once, and looked down also. He felt all their eyes on him, and, with unconcealed mutterings, flung himself back into his seat. Mr.

Cobham, with his knee up, had coughed and spat into his India handkerchief, and was abstractedly looking into its folds.

"It would seem that the old intimacy of the two was renewed. They became firmer friends than ever; and about the year eighteen hundred and"—(a fresh search here)—"yes, and ten, a draught-deed was prepared, virtually conveying the whole of the Moore Hall estates to his friend—(give me the draught-deed," he called to his junior, who had it dragged out, and opened in a second)—"under the following remarkable limitations. First to trustees; in trust for himself, for life; then—"

Serjeant Ryder was now standing up.

"What is that? What are you reading from?"

"The draught-deed of eighteen hundred and ten."

"Which was never executed. I object to that paper. No one knows better than my learned friend that it is not evidence. Just pass it up."

"I was reading this," said Mr. Cobham, "as evidence of the *disposition* of Oliver Davis. My learned friend will see I am quite regular."

"I object," said Serjeant Ryder, apparently angry at this trifling, "to *any* paper of this sort. Let's do things regularly."

"My brother Ryder," began the judge, with enjoyment.

"We shall have to come on this later," said Mr. Cobham.

"And we were going to enter it now, nunc pro tunc, as part of the case," supplemented his junior with mildness.

"My brother Ryder," said the judge, with humour, "it seems, objects to take your draught."

Again the waves of obsequious merriment floated over the bar benches. The country gentlemen in the grand jury boxes, indirectly affiliated to the legal profession, relished it with broader and more unrestrained mirth.

When the court had recovered from the effect of this humour, his lordship said, with graduated remonstrance,

"I think, brother Ryder, we must let in this paper. Come, I don't see how we well can't. It seems good evidence. Eh?"

"As good as ever was given," said Mr. Cobham. "A draught-deed."

"Surely," said Serjeant Ryder, stooping over earnestly, "your lordship can't be in earnest. A draught-deed, unsigned, in God knows whose handwriting! We may as well begin again at our elementary books, if *that* be considered evidence."

"I think I must let it in, Brother Ryder," said his lordship, gravely.

"Very well, my lord," said the serjeant, looking to the right and left resignedly. "Just as you please; with all my heart and soul. Go on with the case."

"His lordship," went on Mr. Cobham, "having ruled this piece of documentary evidence to be admissible, I was going to say

(give me the letter of the 25th June)—to say that old Oliver Davis, in a letter dated the 25th June, and which we now produce, and which my learned friend may see if he likes, alludes to this intended disposition of his property." And Mr. Cobham read his letter triumphantly. "But this does not affect the matter. Not in the least. It would seem, however, that a sort of coldness sprang up between the friends. Later, again, a cousin, a William Davis, then an elderly man, was taken into favour, and on the twenty-first—of—August," said Mr. Cobham, with glasses on, and his face well down to his brief, "eighteen hundred and twelve, he executed a deed of settlement, by which he conveyed all the Moore Hall estates—to—William Davis—and his heirs, in the usual way. That deed was duly executed, and was in court. His learned friends were welcome to—"

"We admit all the proofs," said the serjeant, contemptuously. "Go on with the case."

"By that deed he made himself tenant for life, with remainder to William Davis, his first and other sons in tail male, remainder to his heirs general, in the usual way, in fact. In default of these, the estate was settled on his old friend, General Halton Ross, and his heirs male. To compress the whole into a sentence," said Mr. Cobham, "our case is this."

The story, in short, told them by Mr. Cobham, and told dramatically, amounted to this: In course of time, Oliver Davis died, and William Davis, the cousin, succeeded. William Davis, the cousin, had one child, called William Oliver Davis (and indeed, by-and-by, the jury got bewildered when the learned counsel began sonorously to ring their names like loud bells, now pulling "Will-i—am Davis," and then, with a far fuller reverberation, "Will-i—am O-liver Davis"), then married, and his daughter, Alice Olivia Davis, was the defendant in the present suit.

"I have thus, gentlemen of the jury," said Mr. Cobham, "taken you so far through all the steps of the title." So indeed he had. And that title being conceded satisfactory, the laymen in court wondered how it was to be disturbed. So now began the dramatic part. "It would seem that William Oliver Davis, while a young man, and previous to his marriage, travelling in Scotland, fell in with a manufacturer's daughter of strong will and great cleverness. This lady, whose father was on the verge of bankruptcy, had discovered the prospects that were in store for young William Oliver Davis, and had determined to secure him. He was a wild youth, had fallen passionately in love with the young lady, and, according to Mr. Cobham, his client had married the manufacturer's daughter secretly, according to some Scotch form, which he—William Oliver Davis—believed would not hold good in England. "As if," said Mr. Cobham, "that tie, that holy tie, which is good before Heaven in one spot shall not be good before the same tribunal in another; as if the union that is cemented in the wildest island of the Hebrides

is not to be equally enduring on the ruggedest shore of the Irish coast; at the Land's End as well as at John o'Groat's corner! Thank God," said Mr. Cobham, warning unexpectedly, "a Scotch marriage still holds good in this fair land of England, and is still a protection for helpless women against the designs of wicked men!"

Later on, the youth returned to his family, and soon heard that the Scotch lady had turned out very strangely—had run away from her parents with a captain—and was supposed to have died miserably. Three or four years later, the youth married an heiress, and died, leaving a daughter. The point of the whole thing was to be this. As William Oliver was married in Scotland, or was maintained to have been married, the second marriage was a nullity, and the offspring of that marriage—who was the present defendant—was illegitimate, and could not "come in" under the terms of the settlement. It therefore passed to the Rosses, who were the other parties in remainder named in the deed.

Then he explained the way in which the present action came to be brought. The plaintiff's father was an old and infirm man of eighty when his rights accrued; was very nervous and excitable, and declared that he would have "no law" during the short span of his life that remained. He had died a couple of years before, and Ross, the present plaintiff, then serving in India, had come home at once, and had lost no time in making his claim.

A very strange case, and stated by Mr. Cobham with all his usual clearness; but how would they make it out? This was said by the great legal unemployed among each other, when the judge retired to lunch. That was all very well; but how would they make it out? The court, as it were, stood at ease. Every one was chatting, and put on their hats, not that they cared to have them on, but for the pleasure of having them on now at least without check or restraint.

Ross hung about the door, every now and again putting in his wistful face with the fiery eyes. "They call this doing justice," he said. "I begin to see how it will end! That old swine on the bench cares no more for the case than he does for an old shoe. It's disgusting. Look at the way they waste the public time—jabbering away over his sherry and chop."

A light figure tripped up, a soft fair face was close to him.

"Well," she asked, timorously, "how is it going? Well?"

He burst out with a laugh. "Why, how should it go? How long have they been at it? Do you expect a thing of this sort to be settled off-hand? Why, they haven't began; and see! Don't be plaguing me with expresses and messages in this way. I have enough on my mind without *that*. Go home, do now, like a good girl." This was gentler than his usual mode of speech. And she went away quite grateful. He turned in hastily, fearful of having lost anything.

They were at work. A very broken-down old man, with white hair and a walnut face, but yet with a cunning expression in his eyes, was being examined by Mr. Cobham. He was striving to hear, striving to speak; and Mr. Cobham was striving to catch what words came from him. The judge was conscious of a window at the far end of the court, and motioning with hand; and whenever Mr. Cobham stopped, said, "Go on, Mr. Cobham." Ross stamped savagely under the table. And there, too, was his leading counsel, looking from side to side, carelessly sucking an orange. The administration of justice was growing disgraceful in this country.

"The trouble we had to get at this old fellow," said the solicitor's clerk to two or three barristers near the door; "to dig him up, almost. Mr. Grainger, Ross's friend, was the man who did the job. He hunted him up for two months, night and day. Never let him go a moment. Hung on him like a bull-dog. It was wonderful. Listen, now. He is doing wonderfully well."

So he was. Under the skilful leading of Mr. Cobham, who had at last got the range, and could hear himself, and make the old man hear, he began to tell his story. How about the year so-and-so—in the month, he couldn't give the month—he was in Aberdeen, sitting down-stairs one evening. How he recollected Miss Macgregor sending him out *for* to bring young William Davis to her. He was not very willing, but he did come at last. After a time, he heard stampings and "whirritings," and sounds of sobbing and wailing; and he owned, to the great merriment of the court, that he had crept up-stairs and listened, and that the whole dispute was about a marriage. Presently he heard the young man say, very sulkily, "Well, call up Jamie and the maid, and I'll do what you like." And then, said the old man, amid loud laughter, "I thowt it were high time for me to be going." (His lordship was really diverted, and, to add to the hilarity, said, "You were afraid of being surprised, no doubt?") The old man and the maid were then called up into the room, and William Oliver, standing up with the young leddy's hand in his, told them that he declared that he and the young leddy were man and wife, and bidden them recollect what he, Mr. Davis, had said. They then retired, wondering at this ceremony, which, as Mr. Cobham explained to the jury, was one of the formulas to constitute a Scotch marriage, and was known as a contract of *verba de presenti*. There was great sensation at this the dramatic portion of the trial, and yet greater when Serjeant Ryder stood up, and all but dressed himself, carefully arranging his wig and gown with dandyism, to cross-examine the old man.

The old man kept his wiry fingers tightly clasped as he was put to the customary question, "To whom did you tell *this* story first? When did you tell it? Why didn't you tell it before?" with more to the same effect; the old man answering warily, with his head on one side and his wiry fingers tightly clasped together. Mr.

Cobham presently "interposed," and said his learned friend would learn all that by-and-by from the plaintiff here, and his friend, who by almost miraculous exertions had found out this important witness.

But Serjeant Ryder was not to be disposed of in that fashion. He affected to submit, and with a quiet eagerness for information began to ask particulars about the old man's life. Where was he in such a year? Ah! very good. Well, from that year to such a year what was he doing? Come now, try and recollect. Oh, he must. You know you must have a capital memory to recollect all this about the parlour and the calling up. Well, he was in Aberdeen. What! during all these long years never out of Aberdeen? Never—that is to say, never. Why, had he ever been out of the country? N—no—that is, yes, for a time. What, travelling? It was only for a time. What, travelling? repeated the learned gentleman, in a louder voice. Well, he supposed a man could travel if he liked. Was it travelling for pleasure or profit, come now? Then came one of those secret inspirations which to a lawyer are as convincing as a revelation. "Come, sir," said the serjeant, in a solemn roar, "WERE YOU EVER SENT AWAY OUT OF THE COUNTRY?"

This was spoken of afterwards among the Bar as "a lucky shot in Ryder." Witness was in great confusion. "Come, sir," roared the serjeant, as from a quarter-deck; "take your hand down and answer. Come, sir."

Cobham really must interpose here. Up to a certain point he had given his learned friend any latitude—but Ryder was now savage. He was not to be interrupted. The witness was in his hands. He must beg that Mr. Cobham would sit down, and sit down at once. After a terrific combat over the old man, who was looking vacantly from one to the other, the answer was at last wrung out of him that he had been seven years away, in Botany Bay. Then Ryder sat down, panting and fanning himself.

Other witnesses then came. Among them Mr. Tilney, who took the oath with extraordinary reverence and solemnity, and added the words, "So help me God, Amen," of his own motion, and with great fervour. Relating what he felt afterwards at dinner, he said, "I was in the presence of my Maker, you know. And I was to speak the whole truth, every particle of the truth, and nothing in the wide world but the truth. Words which seem to me awfully impressive." But he did not think that perhaps the simple text of the original would have been more so.

What had Mr. Tilney to tell as to this trial? Simply this. With the leave of his lordship there he would relate all he knew in his own way, which might, after all, simplify the matter—

His lordship thinks bluntly, and without raising his spectacles from the paper, that he had better answer any questions put in the regular way.

"Yes," says Mr. Paget, "if you will follow



me, Mr. Tilney, we shall be shorter." Now, had he ever heard any allusion in the family to this Scotch marriage—any discussion, you know—and when?

Mr. Tilney put a long first finger to his forehead, in the shape of a large human knocker, as who would say, "I will rap *here*, and find out for you." And then, after thinking painfully, said that about twenty years ago he remembered distinctly being at the table of General Ogle, who was then Colonel Ogle, and equerry to his Royal Highness the Dook of York. He had served in the disastrous Walcheren—

"In short," said Mr. Paget, "he dined with you. Any one else?"

"I could tell you," said Mr. Tilney, "the names of every one there, just as if it were yesterday; only give me a little time. There was——"

"Never mind *that*," said Mr. Paget. "Was there a John Davis there, cousin of the settlor?"

"There was," said Mr. Tilney, with the knocker up, and seeing the cousin up in the cornice. "There was; and there was also——"

"Very good. Now let me ask you, did any one say anything about this matter of the marriage?"

"I distinctly recollect," said Mr. Tilney, solemnly—"and I know that I am on my oath, and in presence of the searcher of hearts—General Ogle, then Colonel Ogle—I recollect his saying distinctly——"

Again the serjeant was standing up. "I must interpose here, my lord. This can't be evidence."

"General Ogle said that William Oliver Davis had told him——"

"*Will* you stop, sir?" said the serjeant. "D'ye hear me, sir? Is that Ogle alive or dead?"

"I can't take on me to say," said Mr. Tilney, wisely. "No, no. Not that."

"Exactly," said the serjeant. "Then your lordship sees at once this can't be evidence."

"I don't see that," said his lordship, with a pleasant twinkle.

Mr. Cobham started up. "Ogle," he said, "was a relation of the Davis family."

"Let them prove the death of Ogle, or call Ogle," said the serjeant, excitedly; "but let us keep to the common principles of evidence."

Mr. Justice Buckstone said, however, he was inclined to admit this piece of evidence *de bene esse*, "as family repute," and that he would make a note of the objection. There was then a discussion as to what amounted to "family repute."

Again the serjeant lay back resignedly, and looking from side to side.

"Go on, sir," he said, "go on. Tell your story any way you like."

And then Mr. Tilney said how Colonel Ogle had told him how William Oliver had come to him in a maudlin state, saying that he was undone, and that there was a wretched woman in Scotland who had entangled him in some of their infernal marriage tricks, and that he was a miserable creature generally.

Mr. Cobham, during this important bit of evidence, had his eyes fixed on the jury with an expression almost amounting to—"What did I tell you, now?" and nodded very often as Mr. Tilney told his tale.

It was very hard to get that gentleman out of the box; for when dismissed with a "That will do, Mr. Tilney," he would wave off that congé with a "Pardon me!" and begin again with fresh but unimportant details, which, as it were, lay on his conscience.

"Quite right, Mr. Tilney; now you can go."

"Pardon me," he said. "I have taken an affidavit here to tell every particle of the truth, the entire substratum of the truth, and nothing whatever *but* the truth—without fear, favour, or affection. His lordship, I know, would not wish me."

Then two highly important letters were handed in of remote date, which alluded to conversations with William Oliver Davis in reference to his marriage. These were objected to, on the ground of post *lis mota*, that is, as having been written at a time *after* the question of the disputed marriage had arisen.

This was fiercely argued on both sides, as it was really important evidence. And the two counsel seemed to be straining and toiling to throw each other like Cumberland wrestlers. But the judge again said, with a smile, "He was inclined to let it in *de bene esse*." On which Serjeant Ryder flung himself into his seat angrily, and said "He thought he had learned the rules of evidence when he was a boy, but it seemed he must begin again. God bless him! what were they coming to?" And he bade his learned friend—and almost commanded him—"go on." Some one near Mr. Cobham heard him whisper exultingly behind the back of his hand, "We got that in cleverly—eh? Old Buckstone *is* with us breast high."

#### CHAPTER XVII. THE VERDICT.

AFTER this, the case proceeded rapidly. The defendants had little evidence. But Serjeant Ryder made a "splendid" and damaging speech, showing up the deaf, infirm, incoherent old convict "whom they had got" enlarged from his sentence expressly for this case, and invariably speaking of him as "the old convict," "my learned friend's old convict," "*their* convict," "for this indeed we have the convict's testimony," with more to the like effect, which somewhat depreciated the character of the plaintiff's case. He denounced the whole as a "concocted case," made the roof re-echo with that word, and those at a distance only caught the middle syllable, and thought he was declaiming about poultry. Out in the great hall, down the long corridors, drifted those burning accents of "the counsellor's," denouncing the whole, with a gasp, as a "hideous tr-r-rumped-up case—concocted thing—concocted in its inception, concocted in its execution, concocted at the beginning, concocted in the middle, *concocted* at the end." And he asked them confidently (and at the same time

suffering painfully to the naked eye from heat) to "*scent*" this action from the court. And he dropped exhausted into his seat, leaving the heavy jury in a state of pettish doubt and uncertainty as to what they were to think or do.

Then the judge charged, and at the close of the judge's charge, Serjeant Ryder's junior, who had been writing a good deal behind, put a paper into his leader's hand, who thereupon stood up and "tendered a bill of exceptions." Mr. Justice Buckstone, who did not wish to be "annoyed with the thing afterwards," said, good naturedly, that "he had put the thing as clearly as possible to the jury," and, if anything, rather more fairly for Serjeant Ryder's client than was consistent with strict justice. "Much better leave the thing to these gentlemen, who are quite capable of doing substantial justice between the parties. We shall only be embarrassing the case hereafter. Come, now," said the judge, with an insinuating sort of invitation to his brother.

But his brother was cold, and stern, and hard, and pressed his exceptions.

"Well, read them, read them," said the judge, pettishly.

They were:

1. That the learned judge should not have admitted in evidence a draught-deed, and one not in the handwriting of the settlor.

2. That Ogle's declaration as to a conversation on the alleged Scotch marriage should have been withdrawn from the jury, it not being shown that Ogle and the other parties to the conversation were alive or dead.

3. That the two letters should not have been received as evidence, as being post *lis mota*.

Mr. Cobham listened to his learned friend's points with some anxiety, and not a little disturbed, but was reassured by something in the looks of the heavy hunting jury. Perhaps the unworthy disparagement of the "convict" had not so much effect, especially as he, in his reply, had effectually rehabilitated the convict into "an aged man," who had lived through many troubles and youthful follies ("and let such of us as are without sin, gentlemen, be the first to cast a stone"), who had travelled well-nigh on "to the great gates of the valley of the shadow of death, like us all," and who in his long life had done many things which he now wished *undone*, and had left things *undone* which, &c. In this way was this important witness rehabilitated. And then the jury retired.

It was now seven o'clock. Every one was rising, gathering up papers, talking pleasantly and noisily, and dispersing. Hot, flushed, worn, and with eyes that almost seemed to flare, Ross went out of the court into the cool air. Already the lamps were lighted and the gaudy grocers' shops illuminated, and a crowd of lounging idlers in corduroy and fustian gathered in the middle of the road. Ross came out, angrily pushing his way, and muttering impatiently about "idle people with nothing to do." He caught hold of his solicitor. "Well," he asked, "how do we stand now?" The other answered, ex-

citedly, "I don't know, Mr. Ross. I hope you will be satisfied before an hour is over—*fully* satisfied. I have washed my hands of the whole business, long ago. I hope you listened to Serjeant Ryder's speech, and that that satisfied you?"

"Why didn't you retain him, then?" said Ross, insolently. "That was *your* business."

"It has been a nice mess from the beginning," said Mr. Cater, fiercely. "I tell you what, sir—I wouldn't give twopence-halfpenny for the chance of a verdict—there!"

He left him. Mr. Tilney came up with Mr. Tillotson, and took Ross's arm. They walked home together. "Come along!" he cried. "You take the other, Tillotson," he said, meaning his arm. "We have all gone through a great deal to-day."

"And you have picked up some encouraging news—eh?" said Ross.

"I said to myself," said Mr. Tilney, dreamily, "in that witness-box, tell the exact truth, the whole undivided truth, and nothing in the wide world but the truth—just as the words run. You have no idea what a curious feeling it is. Dear me! I could have given them a perfect photograph of the little supper. Ogle came in as drunk as an owl."

"What a pity you didn't tell them *that*," said Ross, with a sneer.

"At all events," said Mr. Tillotson, kindly, "I do think there are excellent chances. I thought there was a great impression made on the jury, and some one near me said, I think, they were all radicals to a man."

"It is very good of you to take such trouble—very kind of you to say so," said Ross, indifferently, and half sneering. "Let us get along quickly, for God's sake! I want some dinner, and then I must get back to that infernal court."

"There was a boy there that I ventured to engage to wait until the verdict came in, and then drive as hard as he could up to the Close with the news. I knew you would be anxious."

Ross looked at him half softened. "Very good of you," he said again. "We shall hear soon enough. All news will travel quicker than your boy."

It was a solemn and mournful dinner. The ladies of the family had heard the foreboding as to the result. Indeed, Mr. Cater had gone up expressly to repeat his declaration of its possible value at something under "twopence halfpenny." Mrs. Tilney glowed and coloured now and again as she thought of the folly of the thing. There was but little spoken. Ross sat and glared on them, and at every sound outside looked with a start towards the window. As he did so, he saw Mr. Tillotson talking in a low voice to Ada Millwood, and he broke out impatiently:

"I wish you had left your boy and your cab alone. I have heard it coming twenty times now. And for God's sake, Ada, can't you leave that trial; you'll have plenty of time to talk of it, and to gloat over it, and to say what a pity

about that Ross; why wouldn't he take advice! I know the regular jeremiad. And the sensible friends will lay their heads together. Confound those mule-headed jurors!" he said, starting up; "can't they settle a simple case like that? And yet they can sell a horse, and weigh their meal, infernal dunder-headed crew! I never saw such a collection of oafs. I knew how it would be when they came into the box. But I give you notice, it shan't stop here! Don't think it. I'll begin it all, all again. And I shan't be done. I shan't wait here any longer." And, drinking off a tumbler of wine, he went out of the room.

He left them sitting in silence and looking at each other. Mrs. Tilney tossed her head.

"He is really getting like a man possessed," she said.

"He is excited," said Mr. Tilney. "Surprising! Yet I declare, when I went up into that box to-day, I just felt as if I were going in to dinner—twenty-two, you know, and the Chief Justice there sitting at the head."

"We must make allowance for him," said Mr. Tiltotson, gently, "at this particular moment. He is naturally excited."

"But," said Mrs. Tilney, "we have always to be making allowances. He is always the same rude, unbearable creature that you see him to-night; to myself I can only say that he is unvaryingly rude—rude."

An hour went by. Ross came back, tired, jaded, with a sort of hopelessness in his face. Mrs. Tilney read it off, and started up.

"There! He has lost!" she cried. "I told you so; I always said so."

"Hush!" said Mr. Tiltotson, authoritatively. "They have not 'found' yet, I am sure. Is it not so?"

"Your *superior* divination," said Ross, "has hit it off. That old woman who tried it has just called them out, and they say there are some of them won't agree, and he wants to discharge them. The infernal old ass wants to go home and drink his claret, and go to bed after his debauch; but Cobham, who is good for something, has made him send them back for an hour or two. I hope to God he'll make him lock 'em all up for the night without fire or candles, and starve their fat carcasses into common sense! I'd like to give 'em a lesson all round that they wouldn't forget in a hurry!"

He was almost savage with vexation and suspense. Mr. Tiltotson had gone away. Another hour passed by, then half an hour. Suddenly they heard wheels. They rushed to the window. It was the dean's carriage passing by.

"It's only that apostle Ridley coming home gorged! 'Blessed are the poor in spirit.' You have a nice pack of drones down here, haven't you? There's one just gone home to the hive."

"Where's Mr. Tiltotson, Augusta?" said Mrs. Tilney. "Was he to come back?"

"He's in his bed, of course," said Ross,

"tucked in like a precise puritan as he is. What's the fancy you have all taken to that fellow? Any one that knew anything of the world would see he was nothing but a common city prig!"

Mrs. Tilney did not answer.

("I hold," she had always said to her friends, "as little communication as I can with him.")

Wheels again.

"There!" said Ross. "More drones for the hive. Why don't you all get up and rush to the window?"

But the wheels did not pass the window. A cab had stopped at the little green gate. There was a quick patter of steps on the gravel of the little walk. There were voices—voices of the solicitor and Mr. Cobham. Mr. Tiltotson, opening the door, had rushed in with a radiant face—a face of real joy and satisfaction.

"It is all safe!" he cried. "You have gained! The jury has behaved nobly! They have found for you!"

The whole family fell into a sort of tumult. They forgot their conventional restraint before company, and uttered a cry of joy.

Ross stood in the middle looking round with exulting eyes, and for a moment without speaking.

"Ah! What did I tell you?" he said. "What did I always say? Do me justice *now*, at least. Who shall say the bold game isn't the best—eh? Who has the best eyes and the best wit—eh?"

"Indeed, William, we were all wrong," said Mrs. Tilney, obsequiously.

"It is wonderful," said Mr. Tiltotson, almost with enthusiasm; "and I am really so glad. I congratulate you again and again, Mr. Ross."

"Thank you," said the other, with some softness; "I am obliged to you."

"And where is Miss Ada?" said Mr. Tiltotson. "We must tell *her*. Ah! here she is."

She came gliding softly in, without sound almost. She read the good news in all their faces. She went up to the centre figure; the yellow hair and the calm soft face beneath it were lit up as with a saint's glory.

"Dear, dear William, I am so happy!" she said.

"My lodgings are not far from here," said Mr. Cobham, "so I thought I would look in and let you know. Very glad indeed—very."

"You did wonders, sir, professionally," said Mrs. Tilney, complementarily. "You laboured through the dust and the heats. We owe it all to you, sir, and I *think* a little to my testimony in that box."

"And to some other little help too," said Mr. Cobham, smiling. "Mr. Ross, just one word outside here."

They both walked out—down the path to the little gate. It was a calm night. The cathedral rose before them like a great Head on a shore, with a cold blue waste behind it.

"Fine thing that church of yours," said Mr. Cobham. "Well, look here, we have pulled through this, with a squeak, indeed. Take my advice, don't lose an hour in settling."

"Settle," said Ross, starting; "what d'ye mean?"

"Settle, settle, settle, just as Sir Robert said, Register, register, register. It was next door to a miracle. You had a bull-headed jury, and the most ignorant judge on the bench. Why, sir, the verdict won't stand a minute! We'll be upset on the exceptions."

"But surely you said they were——"

"In court, of course we must do the best we can. Ryder was perfectly right; he had no business to admit those letters. Once the verdict is set aside, and we have only our convict to go upon! A nice fellow that, by the way! However, that's my advice, you know, and you can do as you like."

"Oh, of course," said Ross, coldly. "You mean it well, and all that sort of thing. Oh, of course, we shall consider it."

"Just as you like," said the other; and walked away to tell the "brother" who shared his lodgings, what a cold-blooded, ill-conditioned client he had pulled through as "up-hill a case" as ever he saw, and yet the savage had never asked him to dinner, or so much as thanked him.

#### BOSIO'S STUPENDOUS FLOWER.

IN Lockhart's story of Valerius (now too little read), a Christian maiden is described as gathering, in the gardens of a stately Roman villa, a certain flower which symbolised in a wonderful manner some of the deepest mysteries of her religion. No doubt the passion-flower is intended; but, although it would be difficult to find an error in the classical details of Valerius, the introduction of this mysterious flower is altogether an anachronism. The passion-flower was not known in Europe until the beginning of the seventeenth century, when its first appearance created an extreme sensation.

In the year 1610, Jacomo Bosio (historian of the Knights of Malta, and uncle of the better known Antonio Bosio, author of *Roma Sotterranea*) published at Rome his vast folio entitled *La Trionfante e gloriosa Croce*, a work "very pleasant and profitable to all good Christians." It contemplates and describes the cross of Our Lord from all possible points of view—historical, antiquarian, mystical; and has much to say of various representations of it impressed on the different divisions of the natural world. While Bosio was at work on it, there arrived in Rome an Augustinian friar, named Emmanuel de Villegas, a native of the city of Mexico. He brought with him, and showed to Bosio, the drawing of a flower so marvellously amazing—*si stupendo e maraviglioso*—that Bosio was for some time in doubt whether it would be prudent to mention it at all in his book—"parendomi cosa tanto mostruosa, per così dire, e tanto

straordinaria." But, in the mean time, many personages—"di qualità e di gravità"—inhabitants of New Spain, brought him other drawings and descriptions. Some Mexican Jesuits, who happened to be in Rome, confirmed all the marvels of the flower; and certain Dominicans at Bologna engraved and published a drawing of it, accompanied by the poems and "ingenious compositions" of many learned and accomplished persons. Bosio, therefore, saw clearly that it was his duty to give it to the world as the most marvellous example of the *croce trionfante* hitherto discovered in forest or in field.

The flower represents, he tells us, not so directly the cross of Our Lord, as the great mysteries of His Passion. It is a native of the Indies of Peru and of New Spain, where the Spaniards call it "the flower of the five wounds" (*flor de las cinco llagas*), and it had clearly been designed by the most merciful and powerful Creator of the world, in order that it might help, in due time, toward the conviction and conversion of the heathen people among whom it grows. "In due time," writes Bosio: for its mysteries were carefully shrouded from all ordinary observers, since the flower kept always the form of a bell (*campanella*), only opening so far as this while the sun was above the horizon, and shrinking back at night within its five protecting leaves, in which state it looks like an unopened rose. Bosio, however, gives a drawing of it fully expanded, for the satisfaction of all pious readers, "who may thus have the consolation of contemplating in it the profound marvels of its, and of our own, Creator. And it may well be that, in His infinite wisdom, it pleased Him to create it thus shut up and protected, as though to indicate that the wonderful mysteries of the cross, and of His Passion, were to remain hidden from the heathen people of those countries until the time preordained by His Highest Majesty."

The perpetual bell-like shape of the flower is an error. It only takes this form when expanding or fading. But it is by no means the greatest of Bosio's pleasing delusions. The figure he gives us of the passion-flower shows the crown of thorns twisted and plaited, the three nails, and the column of the flagellation, just as they appear on so many ecclesiastical shields and banners. Either the Jesuits and Augustinians of Mexico must have been very indifferent draughtsmen, or they did not hesitate to assist the marvels of the flower by a little traveller's licence. Bosio proceeds to describe it. "The upper petals," he says, "are tawny (*di color leonato*) in Peru; in New Spain, they are white, tinged with rose." (This, no doubt, refers to distinct species.) "The filaments above resemble a blood-coloured fringe, as though suggesting the scourge with which Our Blessed Lord was tormented. The column rises in the middle. The nails are above it. The crown of thorns encircles the column; and 'close in the centre of the flower, from which the column rises, is a portion of a yellow colour,



about the size of a reale, in which are five spots or stains of the hue of blood, evidently setting forth the five wounds received by Our Lord on the cross.' The colour of the column, the crown, and the nails, is a clear green (*verde chiara*). The crown itself is surrounded by a kind of veil, or very fine hair, of a violet colour (*di color pavonazzo*), the filaments of which number seventy-two, answering to the number of thorns with which, according to tradition, Our Lord's crown was set; and the leaves of the plant, abundant and beautiful, are shaped like the head of a lance or pike, referring, no doubt, to that which pierced the side of Our Saviour, whilst they are marked beneath with round spots, signifying the thirty pieces of silver."

Such is Bosio's account of this most "stupendous" flower. He had never seen it; and although it was described and figured in Spain in the same year, no plants or seeds of it seem as yet to have reached Europe. But the stir which the works of Bosio and of the "ingenious" persons of Bologna caused among the botanists and theologians of Italy, soon brought about the introduction of the plant itself; and, before the year 1625, it had established itself, and blossomed, at Rome, in the gardens of Cardinal Odoardo Farnese, then the most distinguished patron of horticulture in Europe. Tobias Aldinus, of Cesena, who was at once the keeper of the cardinal's garden and his physician, describes the passion-flower in his account of the rarer plants in the Farnesian gardens (Rome, 1625). "This," he says, "is the famous plant sung by poets and celebrated by orators, the plant reasoned about by philosophers with the utmost subtlety, praised by physicians for its marvellous virtues, sought for eagerly by the sick, wondered at by theologians, and venerated by all pious Christians." Its native Indian name was "maracot;" from the likeness of the fruit to a small pomegranate, it was sometimes called "granadilla;" but in Italy it was usually known as "Fior della Passione," the name which it has retained throughout Europe. Aldinus, a man of science as well as a "pious Christian," gives a very beautiful and accurate engraving of the flower; and then, setting aside many of Bosio's marvels, he proceeds to show "what theologians may really find in it."

"The nails on the top are represented so exactly that nothing more perfect can be imagined. They are sometimes three, sometimes four in number; and there is a difference of opinion as to the number of nails used in fastening Our Lord to the cross." (Only there are occasionally five nails, and no theologian has ever pronounced for this number.) "In the open flower they are twisted, and marked with dark blood-like spots, as if they had been already removed from the cross. The small undeveloped seed-vessel may be compared to the sponge full of vinegar offered to Our Lord. The star-form of the half-opened flower may represent the star of the wise men: but the five petals, fully opened, the five wounds. The base of the ovary is the column of the flagellation. The filaments

represent the scourges spotted with blood, and the purple circle on them is the crown of thorns, blood covered. The white petals symbolise the purity and brightness of Our Lord, and his white robe. The 'corniculata folia,' the sub-petals, white inside and green without, figure hope and purity, and are sharply pointed, as if to indicate the ready eagerness with which each one of the faithful should embrace and consider the mysteries of the Passion. The leaves of the whole plant are set on singly, for there is one God, but are triply divided, for there are Three Persons. The plant itself would climb toward heaven, but cannot do so without support. So the Christian, whose nature it is to climb, demands constant assistance. Cut down, it readily springs up again, and whoever holds the mysteries of the Passion in his heart cannot be hurt by the evil world. Its fruit is sweet and delicate, and the Passion of Our Lord brings sweet and delectable fruit to us."

But after all, says Aldinus, although the plant and flower may be thus explained, so much mystery can hardly be discovered in it, "nisi per vim," without a certain violence. For the cross, the chief emblem of the Passion, does not appear at all. There are sometimes five nails, and there is no lance.

It is probable that the first passion-flower seen in England was not brought from Italy, but was introduced by some of our own adventurers, from Virginia. At any rate, the *Incarinata*, a Virginian species, is that figured by John Parkinson, one of the earliest English botanists, in his "*Paradisus terrestris*, a garden of all sorts of pleasant flowers, which our English ayre will permit to be nursed up." The first edition of this very curious book, which gives us a complete picture of the English garden at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was published in 1629; and it is amusing to compare Master Parkinson's sturdy Protestantism with the "delicate subtleties" of Bosio. "This brave and too much desired flower," he tells us, "the surpassing delight of all flowers," "maketh a tripartite show of colours, most delightful;" and is "of a comfortable sweet scent, very acceptabell." "Some superstitious Jesuites," he goes on, "would fain make men believe that in the flower of this plant are to be seen all the marks of Our Saviour's Passion, and therefore call it *Flos Passionis* . . . and all as true as the sea burnes; which you may well perceive by the true figure, taken to the life, of the plant." Parkinson proposed to call it *Clematis Virginiana*, the Virgin climber; partly with reference to the province from which it came, and partly (as the province itself had been named) in honour of the "bright occidental star," Queen Elizabeth, the glories of whose reign were still freshly remembered. But the *Fior della Passione* has retained its Italian name, and much of its early significance. It has been accepted, especially in recent church decoration, as a worthy companion of the rose and the lily—sacred symbols from the most ancient times; and the New

World has thus contributed her share toward the wreaths of sculptured flowers that garland shaft and capital in the temples of the Old.

### THE DANGERS OF THE STREETS.

ALTHOUGH not a military man, I consider myself an excellent soldier. It must be understood that I am not even a volunteer; that I never owned a musket, rifle, sword, or pistol; that of drill I am profoundly ignorant; that I could no more "countermarch," or "tell off by fours," than I could work out a solar longitude; and that I never wore a uniform of any kind or sort in my life. Still, I look upon myself as thoroughly inured to danger, as brave beyond the ordinary run of men, as being able to skirmish with any light bob or chasseur that ever wore scarlet or blue tunic. I formed this high opinion of myself on the fact that I have daily to walk a certain distance through the streets of London, and that I do it, and live.

Take the crossing from the bottom of Chancery-lane, over Fleet-street, towards the Temple; must not a man be brave, and have what my son at Rugby calls "no end of nerve," in order to accomplish this feat? Must he not be in a manner born to the business of walking the streets of London? I can point out at the crossings the man who has recently come to the metropolis, and the man whose life has been spent in the jungle of brick. In fact, I believe that the police detectives use this test as one of the means by which they "reckon up" an individual "wanted" at Scotland-yard. A foreigner may speak English as well as any native, and may even have learnt to drop his h's. His hat may be made by Christie, and his coat by Poole. He may have the peculiar clean look which those who "tub" every morning alone can boast of, and may sport the moustache and beard of true Saxon shape and make. You may mistake him for an Englishman. But try him at a London crossing—test him at the Regent-circus, the Pall Mall end of Cockspur-street, or in the City, and you will find him out instantly. So with the young man from the country who assumes London airs. He too may deceive, until he has to cross one of those London Redans, a crossing where four streets meet. Then it is all over with him, and his mask falls.

There are different degrees of danger in the risk of life and limb at different crossings. After years of careful study and observation, I cede the palm to where Bishopsgate-street from the north, Gracechurch-street from the south, Leadenhall-street from the east, and Cornhill from the west, form a junction. This spot, during the high noon of City traffic, is quite enough for the nerves even of an old tried Londoner like myself. Say that you have been in the far east of the City—to the docks to taste wine, or to some East Indian firm in Leadenhall-street to inquire about the sailing of a ship, or what not. You are going leisurely westward, thinking how soon you can reach the

City terminus of the Underground Railway, which is to take you to Bayswater, and how you will enjoy the cod's head and the roast leg of South-down at dinner. You arrive at the corner of which I speak, and for the moment your courage fails you, for you think you will never be able to get across and continue your journey homeward. You are half inclined to keep on the pavement, turn down Gracechurch-street or Bishopsgate-street, according as you may be on the right or left-hand side of the way, and trust to chance for arriving at your destination at some time or other. But no; there would be a want of pluck in such a proceeding, from which your spirit as a bold Briton recoils, and therefore you determine to risk it, and to attempt to cross. But as bus succeeds cab, and butcher's cart bus, and Great Northern van butcher's cart, and another bus the Great Northern van, and a private carriage the other bus, and a Hansom the private carriage, and a third bus the Hansom, and a fourth bus the third bus, you shrink back in despair. Still, time is getting on, and the crowd behind you is getting greater. You see one man make the attempt, why should not you? If the stream of vehicles were only strong from one quarter of the compass it would not so much mind, but four rivers of carriages, carts, cabs, busses, vans, and Broughams, are all flowing at one and the same time, meeting like a whirlpool in the centre of the crossing, and jostling, polling, bumping, and cursing, after a fashion and with a freedom only to be seen and heard in this great free city, the capital of the commercial world.

But go you must—the attempt will have to be made sooner or later—and you plunge into the dangerous waters. By diving under the pole of the immense waggon coming down Gracechurch-street, you accomplish half your undertaking; but there is yet much to be done. You must keep your eyes about you, unless you want the shaft of that great van to become acquainted with your spine, and you must bear in mind that nothing would better please the beer-sodden oaf, who, by a wild fiction, is supposed to have some control over the three horses he is driving, than to boast to-night at his pot-house that he had "crushed out" a swell. Be careful; you are only half way across as yet; and there are dangers beyond, of which you wot not. Don't attempt to cross in front of the three-horse van, for, as I said before, the driver is your natural enemy, and the wider berth you give him, the better for you. Get behind that private carriage, and walk close up to it until you see a safe opening towards Cornhill. It is a loss of time, no doubt, particularly as the vehicle is bound for Bishopsgate-street; but better this than that you should be lamed, knocked down, or killed. Close behind you is a four-wheeler, the horse is almost touching your shoulder. It does not matter; Cabby, with all his faults, is a kind-hearted fellow, and he won't hurt you. The policeman stops the river from Gracechurch-street, to allow the torrent from Cornhill to pass on. Stay where you are; your

turn will come ere long. You look to the left and see a dense mass of carriages and horses' heads; no room to cross *there*. Patience yet for a moment; the carriage under whose protection you have placed yourself, is moving. Look out! Dive under that cab-horse's head while he is standing still; follow that bus as it moves; there is an opening; make a rush. Stay, the mass is moving on again; walk close up behind that four-wheeler. There you are! Now for it! Hurrah! Safe on the pavement.

But you have not done yet. To walk along Cornhill is easy enough; but there is the Mansion House to be passed. There, not so much quickness of eye as speed of foot is wanted. You will not be able to get across all at once, you must do it by degrees—by instalments. The vehicles coming down Princes-street are many, and those from Cheapside are many. But they are less numerous than those from which you have just escaped. However, as the space is much wider, and the speed much greater, the danger is of an enlivening nature. You see that lamp-post half way across. That was, no doubt, erected by some benevolent Lord Mayor that pedestrians, not too long winded, might have a resting-place as they make the rush from one side to the other of this dangerous place. Use the blessing as it is intended. Look out, be careful! Now you have an opportunity! There is a space of five yards between that bus and the head of the following cab-horse. Between those you must pass, or wait indefinitely. Off with you for the lamp-post, and Heaven speed you. Well done! You may now take breath before you attempt the other half of your bold feat. You must make a rush for it again. Don't be afraid, the speed of the vehicles is not so great on this side as on that. Courage once more. The line is moving slowly; get close behind that four-wheeler; and you will soon find an opening between those two omnibuses, whose drivers are exchanging compliments in the strongest language. Now, stoop under that bus pole, and you are on the pavement under the Mansion House, safe, if not quite sound in wind.

From this spot, down Cheapside, there is only one other dangerous spot, and that is where Queen-street on the left and King-street on the right (supposing always that you are going westward) run down into the great thoroughfare. Here you must be extremely active if you wish to avoid being crushed. In this part of the City, huge vans abound, and their drivers are murderous. They look as if they were too far gone in malt to care for anything; but the nature of the beasts is to delight in destroying human life and injuring other vehicles. They have one joke, and that is, after crushing up against some neat carriage or other vehicle, to cry, "I say, governor! Take care of my paint!" The plan I recommend all persons to adopt on this spot is, to turn down Queen-street, and cross when they find that the vans have diminished in number, or

else that the line has been brought to a standstill. After crossing, they will be able to come up the other side of the same street, and then continue their journey along Cheapside.

At the corner of St. Paul's Churchyard there is another crossing; not a long one, but dangerous if the pedestrian be not active, fleet, and possessed of an eye accustomed to the work. Many and many a country clergyman and farmer has come to unlimited grief at this corner. I have gone through the ordeal twice a day for many years, and, although I am in the best of practice, it has more than once all but made a widow of my wife. There is no half way friendly lamp-post, unless you attempt to cross from near the fishmonger's shop, which makes the feat all the longer, and consequently all the more dangerous. There is always a double line of carriages. You must look out for an opportunity of crossing the first line, then make your rush and stand still until you see an opening in the other line. Then make rush number two, and come out unwounded, if possible.

Through St. Paul's Churchyard, and down Ludgate-hill, you are generally unmolested. Still, I have seen an old gentleman on one occasion, and a woman with a baby on another, run over at the corner of the Old Bailey. Your enemy at this point will be a small van, or a series of small vans doing their utmost to crush into the traffic of Ludgate-hill. You must either bide your time, and wait until you see an opening, or else walk a little way down the Old Bailey, cross that street, and work round into Ludgate-hill again.

A great peril is now before you: to wit, the crossing where Farringdon-street, Blackfriars-street, Fleet-street, and Ludgate-hill, meet. There is from time to time a feeble attempt made by the police to regulate the crush, but they being in a minority, and the manslaughterous vans being larger and more numerous here than at almost any other crossing, the guardians of our public streets find themselves scarcely heeded by the multitude. The van-driving ruffians, being able to come up the broad streets of Farringdon or Blackfriars at a swinging trot, manage generally, in spite of all police and all order, to smash their way into the crowd. At Farringdon-street crossing, a thorough knowledge of the place and its peculiarities is required, or the unfortunate pedestrian will have gone through all his previous dangers to no purpose. Crossing in front of a cab should, if possible, be avoided here, for as the majority of them are evidently, by the luggage on their roofs, going to or from some railway station, and as the passengers are boiling over with impatience, and asking the drivers impossible questions about less-frequented streets, so the attention of the unfortunate driver is fully taken up between the police in his front and his fare behind, leaving no possible means of looking after the safety of those who cross the path of his horse.

Once to the westward of the Farringdon-street corner, there is little or nothing in the

way of street dangers to encounter, until the pedestrian gets to Charing-cross, unless, indeed, he daringly tries in Fleet-street or the Strand to cross from the one side to the other. But whatever perils he may meet in the west, they are as nothing when compared to those of the east, and, what is more, the police at the west keep vehicles of all sorts in far better order than is ever attained in the City.

The Times recently informed us that, every year, two hundred and twenty-three people are killed by carts or carriages in our thoroughfares. Is it not rather monstrous that the casualties in the streets should be so numerous? At this rate, about two people are murdered every three days, when attempting to walk peacefully in the metropolis of the world.

Can nothing be done to prevent this great and increasing evil?

Then, again, there are the stoppages in the City, which, although a minor evil, are very provoking and annoying. It was only a few days before Christmas, that, being in a Hansom cab on my way to the Great Eastern Railway station, I got jammed up in Worship-street, and for nearly three-quarters of an hour did not move an inch one way or another. Of course I lost my train. What caused this stoppage? One of my old bloodthirsty enemies, a van. The driver of this nuisance had got his vehicle wedged up in a narrow street; he would not move one way or another until he had leisurely unladen an immense load of goods. When the drivers of any of the vehicles that were blocked up by his leviathan expostulated with him, he blasphemed to a horrible extent. In front of my cab, was an old lady in a Brougham, who, as her coachman said, was anxious to catch the train for Harwich, en route to Rotterdam. Would the van-driver budge an inch for that carriage? Not if he knew it. He cursed the coachman, he cursed the carriage that the coachman drove, he cursed the horse that drew the carriage. When he caught sight of the old lady, he cursed her. He said he would not move until he had finished what he was about, and he did not move. At last a policeman was brought out of Shoreditch, and apparently could do nothing, and certainly did it.

Many of us have seen how in foreign cities the traffic is managed by a few mounted gendarmes, who oblige the vehicles to go right and left, and each kind of vehicle to keep its own track. In England, we are so very much afraid of interfering with the liberty of the subject, that sooner than put coercion upon one ill-conditioned rascal, we permit a hundred good men to be inconvenienced and endangered. But, as we cannot, for financial reasons, enlarge our streets, we must adapt our traffic to existing streets, and the traffic must be kept in order by a very much stronger hand. In almost every leading direction throughout the City, there can be found two streets leading to the same destination. In all such cases carriages and other vehicles going west should be made to take

one road, and those going east, the other. No doubt some little inconvenience would be experienced by those who wanted to stop at a particular house in a particular street; but would not that be better than the present universal inconvenience, delay, and danger?

Then as to the foot-passengers; surely with a few more policemen in the principal streets—mounted men detailed for this especial duty—the carriages, carts, and busses, might be made to keep a small interval between each other, and might be obliged to drive slowly at the crossings.

Vans ought on no account whatever to be allowed in the streets between the hours of eight in the morning and six in the evening. They spread terror and desolation wherever they go. They are driven by unmannerly louts, who take pleasure in doing as much damage as possible. They have no varnish or paint which can be spoiled, and, being heavier than anything they can meet, they are in no danger of being overturned, and so don't care what they run against. They have their horses so harnessed as that the driver—who is no driver but a mere holder of reins—has little command over them, even if he were able or disposed (which he never is) to exercise any for the general convenience. It may be said that these conveyances are requisite for the carrying to and fro of goods required at warehouses, and that it would be a case of peculiar hardship if the persons employed at those establishments were obliged to begin business very early, or transact business very late. To this objection it is enough to oppose the general principle, that the convenience of the few must yield to that of the many.

After the van, there is perhaps nothing that goes upon wheels which requires so much looking after as the omnibus. It is a curious fact, that just as a big fat man seems invariably to get into tight-fitting clothes, so a London bus is sure to find its way into the narrowest streets in the City. There is hardly a day on which two of these vehicles fail to meet and stop each other in Threadneedle-street: a thoroughfare so very narrow that no great carriage should ever be allowed to go up or down it. But these two big blundering busses find their way thither, stop up the whole street against themselves and the rest of the public, and distribute language which is in itself a public nuisance. The community in general, and the driving portion of that community in particular, has a lesson to learn, which must be taught it by a stricter police in the streets. And that lesson is, that every man must give way, more or less, to his neighbour: the general good being of far more importance than individual convenience. There is an old parrot expression, first coined in Bumbledom, about self-government and non-interference with vested rights. When that is less heard, and the public good is more considered, we may expect that our streets will not be, as they are now, everywhere to the eastward of Temple Bar, the worst-regulated thoroughfares in Europe, without any exception; and we may hope that something



less than two hundred and twenty-five lives will suffice as a yearly sacrifice upon the altar of the demon, Mismanagement.

### SOMETHING STRONG IN WATER.

It is some comfort, in this unbelieving and pitilessly logical nineteenth century, to know that there still are to be found a few men whose simple and childish faith remains as pure, as untouched by rationalism, as accessible to supernatural influences, as in those grand old mediæval days when the Church imposed on men every item of her creed on pain of torture here and hereafter.

M. l'Abbé Gaume is one of these men, and he has made the fact apparent by the publication of a treatise on the virtues of holy water. At a time when many of our own countrymen, and not a few of our clergy, hold and disseminate the doctrine that natural effects are not to be traced to natural causes, and that an all-wise, all-just, all-merciful, and loving Creator deals with his children, good and bad, alike, by means of blind, blundering, indiscriminate, bull-in-a-china-shop "judgments," in the shapes of cholera, cattle-plague, &c., he may be thanked for giving some notice of a means, having no origin whatever in any rational, scientific, or natural grounds, to avert those sudden, sweeping, insensate furies of "an offended Deity," whose particular motive of offence can be traced to no more definite cause than the general "sinfulness" of a world certainly no worse, and in general striving and struggling to be better, than it has been since its commencement. Further, too, to such persons who, for the most part, are assiduous in devil-worship, the arch-enemy, who only comes a step below God, is duly recognised and considered and gets his full due, in the work of the Abbé Gaume.

The ecclesiastic in question begins by a well-merited attack on science for neglecting, as she unquestionably does, to study and make herself fully acquainted with the properties of holy water—nay, for actually being and remaining unconscious of the extraordinary physical difference that exists between holy and unconsecrated water.

She persists in seeking far and wide for the material causes of disease, whether individual or epidemic, and when she has, or fancies she has, detected these, she proceeds, with a rationalism appalling to the truly devout, to treat the maladies by first removing the causes, then, in as far as her lights allow, healing the effects.

What ought she to do? Hear Monsignor (for our authority is a high Church dignity) Gaume.

He begins by informing us that "water is the mother of the world, and the blood of nature." You may not quite comprehend this, but then that intense desire for comprehending—"wanting to know, you know," to speak familiarly—is just one of the gravest of the many faults Monsignor and his congeners con-

demn. Let us therefore accept the statement that water is the mother of the world, and the blood of nature. Then comes the blessing on the element, hitherto regarded as one generally useful, beneficent, even essential, but not gifted with especial and supernatural powers. But let a priest, be he, as a man, saint or sinner, mumble through a few brief words of consecration, behold! the following results are produced: In the first place, the "water is withdrawn from the influences of the demon." Now we have heard of persons in great suffering "*se démenant comme le diable dans un bénitier*," and, as a proverb is quite as good an authority as some of those cited by the abbé, we may consider this point proved. It occurs to us that if every ship that put to sea took with it a priest or priests to keep continually blessing the water during the vessel's progress, shipwreck and loss at sea of all kinds might be avoided. Surely science, studying the question, might ascertain to a fraction how many priest-power might be needed to consecrate a certain breadth and depth of ocean, and whatever might be the expenses attendant on carrying a staff of ecclesiastics, it might be balanced against the cost of insurance, thus rendered wholly a work of supererogation, to say nothing of the doing away with danger to life.

Let us hear further the effects of holy water. It drives the demon out of water, as we have seen; it also drives him out of fire—his own element! It expels him from the air, from the human body. "It prevents plagues and epidemics, destroys noxious insects, and cures the vine-disease. It remits venial sin; it remits the temporal punishments due to sins." Here is a saving in the matter of purchasing indulgences: "It preserves health; it cures fever; it cures dysentery." Such are a few of its general virtues; but the abbé favours us with the enumeration of certain individual instances of its power, supported by the most irrefragable proofs. He tells us of the cure of a fracture, of a leprosy, of blindness, of a lady in the agonies of death, of a case of epilepsy, of madness, of cancer, of a woman in childbirth; and listen, O Science!—when have you even pretended to attempt the crowning miracle?—Monsignor solemnly assures us, with proofs, à l'appui, "of the resurrection of a corpse by holy water!"

And this is the agent that science, as well as the world in general, persistently ignores. She scales the heavens, she dives into the bowels of the earth, into the depths of the ocean to find the means of improving the condition, moral and physical, of mankind, while scornfully she "passes by on the other side" of that one specific which, through driving out the devil, the sole and only thing needful to secure every advantage here and hereafter—though indeed when it cures all diseases, saves from all peril, and resuscitates the dead, we do not see why we should trouble ourselves about a hereafter—regenerates the world at once and for ever!

"And now let us hear the conclusion of the

whole matter." Says the Monde, one of the chief supports of ultramontaniam, winding up its notice of the work of Monsignor Gaume, "Have a bénitier as elegant and as handsome as you can!"

### THE GENTLEMEN OF THE VESTRY.

GENTLEMEN of the vestry are such thorough-going downright liberal Christians, that, if you slap them on one cheek they immediately turn the other to you, and implore you to hit them again harder. They like to be despised, shown up, and laughed at. Only give them the honours of print, and you may write them down asses through a dozen columns. I was afraid that the gentlemen of the vestry of the parish of St. Sniffens would not like what I recently said about them; but, on the contrary, I find that they glory in it. They are turning the other cheek and asking for more, waiting for it, as I understand, eagerly week after week. Well, they shall not be kept waiting any longer. I have just returned from a vestry meeting, at which matters of the highest parochial importance were brought forward for discussion—such matters as the trusteeship and custody of the parish funds, the disposal of a large amount of parish property, the paving of the roads, the cleansing of cowsheds, and the health of half a million people. I never in my life witnessed such an exhibition of blatant ignorance and noisy incompetence. I will admit that there were half a dozen men who seemed well informed and fit for their duties; but what are half a dozen among a mob of fifty or sixty, who never speak except to expose their ignorance, and who generally speak all at once? It was a scene of noisy disorder from beginning to end. The chairman was continually knocking on the table with his hammer, and saying, "Don't blame me if you don't 'ear." And they didn't blame him, for they didn't want to 'ear. When a member got up to call attention to the fact that there were three hundred houses in the parish requiring the inspection of the sanitary officers, he was fairly talked down. The buzz of conversation grew louder and louder, butchers and publicans exchanged jokes and laughed, one gentleman indulged in the favourite pantomimic performance of engaging in a pugilistic encounter and receiving a blow in the eye, others warmed themselves at the fire, or gathered into groups and talked, with the obvious design of drowning the voice of the speaker and getting rid of the subject. The speaker appealed to the chair, but the chair, instead of protecting him, allowed a gentleman on his left to introduce another matter. The first speaker was obliged to sit down, and we heard nothing more of the three hundred houses which required the attention of the sanitary officers.

The gentlemen of the vestry had no patience for matters of executive, but they were ready enough to listen to polemical personalities.

Thus, while they shut their ears to the important question of sanitary reform, they were all alive when a certain section of the vestry was accused of interested motives in transferring the parish account to a new bank. The resolution on this head was received with loud guffaws.

It may be necessary to explain this matter. Until lately the parish of St. Sniffens deposited its money with the London and Universal; but recently, on the plea of convenience, the account was transferred to the London and Particular, which has a branch in the centre of the parish. The transfer was vigorously opposed by a section of the vestry. It was alleged that the proceeding had originated at the Jolly Dogs or the Pig and Whistle, and that the forty-one vestrymen who signed the requisition had private reasons of their own for doing so. In fact, it was pretty broadly insinuated by the minority that the majority had received accommodation from the London and Particular by way of a bribe. If the gentlemen of the vestry can entertain such an opinion of each other, can they wonder at the suspicion with which they are regarded by the public? At the meeting which I have just been attending, a gentleman rose and congratulated the vestry on the transfer of their account, whereupon another gentleman arose and shouted across the table, "I know you London and Particular."

"Hush, hush!" said the chairman, looking significantly towards the strangers in the gallery.

"Have you been invited to the dinner?" shouted a third. At which there were roars of derisive laughter, followed by a gabble of voices and an uproar, which the chairman was for some time unable to quell. Again and again he rapped on the table, and at last took shelter under the despairing protest:

"Well, don't blame me, gentlemen, if you can't 'ear."

The mention of dinners reminds me that the convivial propensities of the gentlemen of our vestry have recently met with a check. They had been in the habit of dining together rather frequently at the expense of the ratepayers, when suddenly the Poor Law Board refused to sanction the charges for their feasts. The result is, that they dine less frequently and less sumptuously, at their own expense! Before the meddling, shabby, parsimonious Board interfered, they had some glorious feasts, generally at Richmond or Greenwich. I have no record of the proceedings of any of the banquets given to themselves, at the expense of the ratepayers, by the vestrymen of St. Sniffens; but a trustworthy eye and ear witness furnishes me with the following report of a feed lately enjoyed by the vestrymen of the neighbouring parish of St. Piggins:

"The gentlemen of the vestry of the parish of St. Piggins dined together on Thursday last at the Jolly Butchers. Previous to the banquet, they played at skittles and leapfrog. Afraid that their appetites would not be fully equal to the occasion, some of them drank so many

glasses of gin and bitters that they were quite drunk before the dinner began. They were very playful over the dinner-table, and when a gentleman of the vestry was politely asked to hand a potato, he literally did hand it—that is to say, he took it from the dish with his hand, cried ‘play,’ and bowled it at the honourable gentleman who had made the request. The potato took the gentleman’s wicket between the eyes. The gentlemen of the vestry of the parish of St. Piggins followed at this feast a well known practice of the gourmets of ancient Rome, whereby they were enabled, after two hours of eating, to begin all over again. The Romans, I believe, retired for the middle part of the process; but the gentlemen of the vestry, with true modern comprehensiveness, performed the whole operation without moving from the table, except occasionally to slip under it. On returning to town in the evening, the gentlemen of the vestry of the parish of St. Piggins occupied several railway carriages of the second and third class, this being at their own expense, and conducted themselves most joyously. While some grovelled on the floor among the sawdust, and were trodden under foot, others smoked, and laughed, and chaffed, and threw sticks at each other through the lamp-holes in the ends of the carriages, and sung in chorus, ‘Slap bang, here we are again, jolly dogs are we.’ They were such very jolly dogs that persons who objected to extreme jollity were afraid to come into the carriages, and there was so much slapping and banging that I, one of the parochial subjects of the jolly dogs, very narrowly escaped being struck in the face with a stick, which came flying into the carriage through the lamp-hole. I know all this of my own knowledge, because I happened to be dining that day at the Jolly Butchers, and to be a passenger in the same train with the gentlemen of the vestry of the parish of St. Piggins, who had dined together in the next room to mine.”

This is the report from St. Piggins. As an inhabitant and a ratepayer of St. Sniffens, I am proud to say that the gentlemen of our vestry would scorn to be guilty of such excesses. Like noble self-denying parish patriots, they are content with ‘alf a pint and a screw at the Spotted Dog, at their own expense.

But let us return to the Vestry ‘All, where, owing to the enthusiasm of our local representatives, the chairman is still protesting that it is not his fault if the gentlemen don’t ‘ear.

I observe that while matters of a scandalous nature excite interest and provoke lengthened acrimonious discussion, the practical affairs of the parish are almost invariably referred back to the solicitors, or to some working committee, upon which all the responsibility is cast. On no question do the vestrymen seem to be able to come to an intelligent conclusion. If land is to be bought or sold, there will be the widest difference of opinion as to the value of it; if works are to

be executed, there will immediately arise a wrangle as to the proper time for beginning it; if some expenditure be proposed, it will be sanctioned in total ignorance of conditions which render the expenditure quite unnecessary and gratuitous. As an example of the first, may be mentioned a resolution to sell the Workhouse to a railway company. The resolution was no sooner passed than the vestry found that it had made two mistakes; first in agreeing to sell the Workhouse at all, and secondly in asking a sum much below its value. As an example of the last, I may adduce a discussion which has just taken place with regard to the cleansing of cowhouses. It was proposed to pay one pound a ton for removing the refuse; and this would have been carried, had not one member of the vestry been aware of the fact that the cowkeepers were bound by the terms of their licenses to remove the refuse at their own expense. On this occasion the ratepayers were saved from a heavy charge by one in fifty. How often does it happen that this one well-informed person is not present, or that there is not even one among them all who knows anything about the matter in hand? The peroration of an honourable member on the manure question deserves to be recorded. These were his remarkable words: “Take away the cow-dung, and the ‘orse-dung will take care of itself,” which is putting the two articles in the proverbial relation of pence and shillings. I may add, that when the gentleman gave utterance to the above sentiment, he parted his coat-tails and sat down with the air of having said something exceedingly clever.

The gentlemen of the vestry are constantly at feud with their medical officer. A few weeks ago the doctor presented a report, in which he strongly recommended precautions to be taken against cholera and typhus. As cholera as well as typhus has already made its appearance in the parish, his warning was neither unnecessary nor premature. He said:

“There are many reasons to fear that we may be visited with cholera during the coming year. The measures I am about to recommend would be of great service to the public health in any case; they would prepare us to resist cholera, should it make its appearance; they would be useful in checking typhus, which now prevails, and in promoting the public health, even in the absence of epidemic sickness.” The doctor goes on to state that our parish is one of the most populous in the metropolis, and that it should, therefore, have the character of being the most prudent and energetic in caring for the health of its population—a character which it has not yet acquired. He proceeds to show how cholera is invited, and how, according to all medical experience, it can best be guarded against. His advice is so sensible and reasonable, and so temperately urged, that I will quote another passage from his report, with the double purpose of informing the public on sanitary matters, and of showing

the spirit of obstinate resistance in which all useful measures are met by the gentlemen of the vestry.

"We can predict in what kind of localities cholera will be the most virulent, if it does come." (Since this report was written cholera has come. A fatal case occurred a few days ago, within a quarter of a mile of the Vestry Hall.) "Its presence will depend on atmospheric and other causes, over many of which you have no control; the extent to which we, as a parish, shall suffer from it will depend in a great measure upon circumstances over many of which you *have* control. It has been found that cholera, when introduced into a community, chiefly attacks persons who are breathing impure air, who are drinking impure water, or who are committing excesses in diet or drink, or else those who are much depressed by fatigue or fever. Very much may be done to render the air purer in dwellings, especially of the poor, by improved drainage, by attention to ventilation, cleanliness, and the removal of all refuse." The doctor then mentions various places in Kentish Town and Highgate that are without sewerage, and recommends that all such places should be at once provided with sewers; that all houses be made to communicate with sewers by properly constructed drains, that all open sewers be completed and covered, that badly acting sewers be repaired, and that all the sewers, be kept carefully cleansed and flushed.

Now mark how this report and other sensible recommendations were received by the gentlemen of the vestry. The very mild paragraph relating to the character of the parish was designated as "a piece of impertinence," and the medical officer was denounced as "a quack."

The gentlemen of the vestry have also a great antipathy to the coroner, because that functionary occasionally takes an opportunity to lecture them upon their duties. Several inquests have lately been held upon persons who have met their death in consequence of the bad state of the roads. A cab-wheel jerked against a rut, and the driver was pitched into the canal and drowned. It was not known what had become of the poor man for two days, when his body was found floating in the canal. Another man was thrown out of his cart, and so severely injured that he died. The evidence before the coroner went to show that the road was very unevenly paved. A juror said that he had seen fourteen horses fall in a day on this road, in consequence of the irregularity of the stones. "This is a parish where we pay good rates," said the jurymen, "and yet they will not do what is wanted." "No," said another jurymen, "the vestry is all talk, and will not do anything."

Verily, the gentlemen of the vestry are all talk and nothing else. And such talk! In doing nothing they murder the Queen's subjects; in talking, they murder the Queen's Eng-

lish. All society is in the jury-box with a verdict of guilty against them. May they be speedily executed, and made an end of!

#### PROPHETIC FITS—AND MISFITS.

It has been boldly asserted in a recent work, made up of highly entertaining and more or less authentic anecdotes, that the mind of one of the foremost men of the age, impressed as it is with a tinge of fatalism, has suffered considerable disturbance from a prophecy of Doctor Michael Nostradamus.

Granted the existence of this prophecy, the fact *may* be as stated; for though the influence of the vaticinations of Mrs. Shipton, Robert Nixon, and other practitioners of the humbler class, is not distinctly traceable in the political history of their time, Michael was, from his youth, a man of mark, and could at all times command a hearing. It is by no means impossible that such a presage, if delivered, should have attracted imperial notice.

This is its alleged substance:

"At the period when the younger branch of the primeval royal family of France shall be bowed down, it will happen that a man belonging to a house which once for a short time gave a decisive turn to the fate of France will attain the rule—for fifteen years will hold in his hands the highest power—but will then be murdered, not far from Paris, and a member of his family march to the supreme power over his corpse and that of his son."

There is something so clear, positive, and altogether un-Nostradamian in this, that the writer, entertaining grave—or, let him say, joyful—doubts as to its authenticity, and having the prophetic tome at hand, devoted the half of a winter's evening to its perusal. The search through twelve "centuries," each containing a hundred quatrains, for an especial prophecy, is rendered more difficult by the artful obscurity with which friend Michael—more than any of his brother seers—was accustomed to invest his foreshadowings of future events. So well were these warnings (as a general rule) adapted to different eventualities, that the sarcastic M. Naudé compared them to the shoe of Theramenes, which, unlike Cinderella's, fitted every foot. Another sceptic, M. Delandine, was heard to declare that, whereas the common folks regarded Doctor Michael Nostradamus as knowing as much of the future as of the past, he, M. D., would go the length of admitting that he *was* just as well acquainted with the one as with the other!

However that may be, no such alarming prophecy as that above quoted is to be found among the twelve hundred translated by the ingenious Doctor Garencières from the obscure French into still obscurer English; nor do we believe that it lurks anywhere beneath those darker sayings of which that learned gentleman truly remarks, that there are many "very hard to be understood, and others impossible at



all. It could not be rendered into English verse. That's the reason I have translated it, word for word, to make it as plain as I might—as also," adds the worthy doctor, with commendable forethought, "because the reader, if curious of it, may benefit himself in the knowledge of the French tongue."

After which, should the student commence, at a Paris conversation, with the following, it would no doubt create considerable sensation :

Entre plusieurs aux Isles deporter,  
L'un estre nay a dens en la gorge,

which (the translator adds) "is so plain that it needeth no explication." Nay, doctor, but it doth.

In spite of an occasional ill-natured remark such as has been adduced, Michael Nostradamus seems to have enjoyed the rare good fortune, as a seer, to be very much believed in—to have escaped those fluctuations of popularity which attend upon the prophet who has foreseen too much, and to have died before the great bulk of his prognostications were submitted to the test of time.

Born at St. Remy, Provence, on the fourteenth of December, fifteen hundred and three, he was educated at Avignon, and, at the age of twenty-two, commenced medical practice at Narbonne. From thence, at twenty-six, he repaired to Montpellier—then, and still, the best school of medicine in Europe—where he took his degrees with high credit, and thence proceeded to Agen, where the two noteworthy events of his life were, that he married "an honourable gentlewoman," and became the intimate friend of Julius Cæsar Scaliger. Death deprived him of the former, and a quarrel of the latter; whereupon he went to Aix, just in time to meet the plague, which, "as you may read in my Lord of Lannay's book" (published about three centuries since), raged there with great violence for three years, during all which time our physician was entertained there at the city's charges.

From hence he proceeded to Salon de Craux, a few leagues from Aix, and there married, in second nuptials, Anne Ponce Genelle, by whom he had three sons and one daughter.

Our doctor having found by experience that the perfect knowledge of physic dependeth from that of astrology—a maxim too often forgotten by the faculty of our own day—he addicted himself to it, and, as this science wanteth no allurements, progressed mightily, inasmuch that, making some almanacks for recreation's sake, he did so admirably hit the conjuncture of events, that he was sought for far and near.

Upon almanacks—those stepping-stones between physic and the stars—Francis Moore and Michael Nostradamus, physicians, both climbed to wealth and fame. But here occurred the sole reaction in the tide of the latter's success. He had been *too* correct. A cloud of false prophets appeared, speaking, it is lamentable to add, under no higher inspiration than that of printers and booksellers, who "did print and vend

abundance of false almanacks under his name, for lucre sake."

Hence it came that that very ill-conditioned nobleman, my Lord Pavillon, wrote against him, and that the poet Jodelle, angry, no doubt, that almanacks sold better than satire, penned a bitter distichon, which was so pleasing to the wits of those times, that it may be hardly acceptable to our own.

Our sage quickly worked through this passing cloud, and could afford to bite the thumb of scorn at such persons as my Lord Pavillon and Jodelle. He was greatly esteemed by the grantees, and much favoured by that estimable lady, Catherine de' Medici, who had a natural inclination to know future things, and made but an indifferent use of the information she obtained.

Henry the Second of France sent for him to Paris, and held private conference with him on things of great concernment. While there, he was taken with the gout for ten or twelve days; after which, the king sent him one hundred crowns in gold, in a velvet purse, and the queen as much, desiring him to go to Blois, and visit the princes, their three children, with a view to ascertain their future. It is more than probable that, considering the tragical end of all three (Francis the Second, Charles the Ninth, and Henry the Third), the worthy doctor on this occasion wore his mantle of prophecy, with a difference.

After this he returned to Salon, and there completed his unfinished centuries. These he dedicated to the king, discovering to him in his "luminary epistle" the events that were to happen from the birth of Louis the Fourteenth until the coming of Antichrist.

The sage's life was now drawing to a conclusion; but, before recording the final scene, it may not be amiss, writes M. Garencières, to give some recreation to the reader by relating a merry passage that happened to Nostradamus in Lorraine, while staying with the Lord of Florinville, and having in cure the said lord his mother.

"There were two little pigs—one white, t'other black; whereupon my lord inquired, in jest, 'What shall become of these two pigs?' Who answered, presently, '*We* shall eat the black, and a wolf shall eat the white.'

"The Lord of Florinville, thereupon, did secretly command the cook to dress the white, who did so, and spitted it ready for roasting, when it should be time. In the mean time, having business without the kitchen, a young tame wolf came in, and ate up the white pig. The cook, then, fearing lest his master should be angry, dressed the black pig, and offered it at supper. Then the lord, thinking he had the victory, said to Nostradamus, 'Well, sir, we are eating now the white pig, and no wolf shall touch it.' 'I do not believe it,' saith Nostradamus. 'It is the *black* one that is upon the table.' Presently, the cook was sent for, who confessed the accident, the relation of which was as pleasing to them as any meat." There

is something almost touching in the excessive delight with which very moderate jests were hailed by former generations!

His old enemy, gout, turning to dropsy, proved fatal to our physician on the second of July, fifteen hundred and sixty-six, in his "climacterical" year of sixty-three. Some stress was laid on the fact of his having foretold his own decease, by writing upon an ephemerides of that date, "*Hic prope mors est*" (hereabouts is death); but as this was written at the end of June, and realised on the second of July, it was probably more the augury of a physician than an astrologer.

His quaint epitaph in the Franciscan church at Salon may be rendered thus:

"Here lie the bones of the most famous Nostradamus, one who among men hath deserved, in the opinion of all, to set down in writing, with a quill almost divine, the future events of the universe, caused by the celestial influences. O posterity, do not grudge at his rest.

"Anna Pontia Genella wishes to her most loving husband the true happiness."

There followed a fierce contest concerning his character and predictions. His enemies boldly accused him of necromancy and habitual intercourse with the powers of darkness—ridiculing the idea that he could have derived his prescience from judicial astrology, inasmuch as that science is acknowledged not to descend to minute circumstances, such as proper names, the nature of hurts, &c., in which our author largely deals. They pointed to the absence of any unusual sanctity of life or manners, as satisfactory proof that Nostradamus was not indebted for his singular knowledge to the express favour of God. And, finally, the Lord Florimond de Raimond—a "very considerable author," of whose works we have been unable to procure a copy—in a few emphatic sentences, handed over the deceased physician to the very devil himself.

On the other hand, the sage himself, in his curious "lunary" epistle, addressed to his son Cæsar, expressly condemns the art magic—warning him against uniting its study in any manner with that of astrology—and relating how he himself, having some misgiving as to the root of the inspiration under which he had penned a certain treatise, "did burn abundance of writings;" and adds, "Also, my son, I entreat thee not to bestow thy understanding on such fopperies, which dry up the body and damn the soul. Chiefly abhor the vanity of the execrable magic, forbidden by the sacred Scriptures and by the canons of the Church; in the first of which is excepted judicial astrology, by which and by the means of Divine inspiration, with continual supputations, we have put in writing our prophecies."

Upon these "supputations" (calculations) a good deal must necessarily turn; but as they are purely human, and within the range of any student, there needs a divine light upon the judgment, in order to deduce from them proper inferences.

Such a light, there is reason to believe, Michael Nostradamus, bending in solitude over these attractive studies, imagined had been vouchsafed to him—not for any merit or fitness in himself, earnestly deprecating the sacred name of prophet, and confessing himself the greatest sinner in the world, subject to all human afflictions, weak, fallible, and easily deceived, but as the result of the honesty with which he had rejected fantastical imaginations, seeking, in wisdom's waters, the incorruptible metal alone.

That a long course of solitary study of this nature, involving an abstraction from worldly things, may predispose certain natures to receive impressions as supernatural which are due to the aforesaid supputations alone, may be easily conceived. When, therefore, any remarkable event justified his prediction (which, past all question, was frequently the case), Michael must have been more than the weak being he professed himself, not to be disposed to perceive in it an indication of the Divine foreknowledge, sometimes dispensed, as in the instances of Balaam, Caiaphas, &c., through the most unlikely and unworthy instruments.

The prophecies of Nostradamus, commencing in March, fifteen hundred and fifty-five, extend to the year of grace three thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven, embracing a period of considerably more than two thousand years. As the dates are rarely to be fixed, except by inference, here is room for the "shoe of Thera-menés" to be tried on many a foot until the right be found. Let us essay a quatrain or two.

A high wind shall forerun considerable, but indistinct, disturbances:

When the litter shall be overthrown by a gust of wind,  
And faces shall be covered with cloaks,  
The commonwealth shall be troubled with a new kind of men,  
Then white and red shall judge amiss.

An easy solution of the "new kind of men" was found in Luther and Calvin, then commencing the Reformation. For "white and red" read France and Spain.

Here is an unlucky business. Let us hope, if it have not already occurred (and history is silent on the matter), that the electric telegraph may defeat it altogether:

One coming too late, execution shall be done.  
The wind being contrary, and letters miscarry,  
The conspirators, fourteen of a sect (set),  
By the red-haired man the undertaking shall be made.

It is, at all events, satisfactory to have heard it affirmed, on authority, that the present practitioner at the Old Bailey has *grey* hair and a white beard.

Let Austria look to her possessions in Italy:  
Within a while a false frail brute shall go  
From low to high—being quickly raised;  
For he that shall have the government of Verona  
Shall be unfaithful and slippery.

"False frail brute" is not a polite phrase, or—in reference to her ancient unsteadiness—we would forthwith hand over this prophecy to Venice.

Should a mermaid be cast ashore near Portsmouth, it will behove us to complete our sentences:

When the fish, both terrestrial and aquatic,  
By a strong wave shall be cast upon the sand,  
With her strange, fearful, sweet, horrid form,  
Soon the enemies will come near to the walls by the sea.

But now we come to a very remarkable fit indeed, and one that might well, as his biographer asserts, have put our author in credit, as well for its unusual clearness as for the true event of it. It will be better to quote the original French:

De lion jeune le vieux surmontera  
En champs bellique par singulier duelle,  
Dans cage d'or; l'œil il lui crevera  
Deux playes une fois mourir mort cruelle.

The young lion shall overcome the old one  
In martial field by a single duel,  
In a golden cage he shall put out his eye,  
Two wounds from one; then he shall die a cruel death.

Four years subsequent to the promulgation of this prophecy—namely, on the last day of June, fifteen hundred and fifty-nine—Henry the Second of France received his mortal hurt at the tournament given in honour of his daughter's marriage with Philip of Spain. The king's party had won the honours of the day, and the sports were drawing to a close, when the martial prince determined to break one lance more, and, unable to find a worthy antagonist, sent for a noble young captain of his Scottish Guard—Gabriel de Lorges, Count de Montgomeri—and ordered him to tilt against him. The young count refused, but—the king growing angry—he was constrained to obey. In the shock that ensued, De Lorges's lance caught the lower part of the king's gilded helmet, "cage d'or," and, the point breaking away, the splintered stump struck Henry's bowed head above the right eye. Glancing thence, it entered deep *below* the eye, inflicting a second wound, which in ten days proved mortal. Thus was realised the singular expression, "two wounds from one."

It has been affirmed that Henry's death "in a duel" was also foretold, though without circumstance, by Luke Gauric, the astrologer of Gifoni. According, however, to better authority, that excellent non-seer predicted for the king a very long life, whereas he died at forty.

Gauric tried another tack with the tyrant Bentivoglio, of Bologna, to whom he promised dethronement and exile. The affronted prince ordered him to be hung by one arm from a lofty beam, and let fall—a process he endured several times without complaint, and, it was said, without injury.

The poet Boeccalini, however, represents him, in his *Raguagli di Parnasso*, as demanding

justice of Apollo for such maltreatment. The deity calmly responds that, if his art enabled him to foresee Bentivoglio's mishaps, he might have foretold his own. Furthermore, that it was "une grande sottise"—a great absurdity—to predict to *any* sovereign circumstances less gratifying than those which usually form the staple of court prophecy.

We have had a fit of Nostradamus. Anon, a misfit.

Gassendi relates that, in sixteen hundred and thirty-eight, Suffren, judge of Salon, placed before him the horoscope of his father, Antoine Suffren, in the handwriting of Nostradamus himself. Upon a careful comparison of the prophecy with the event, Gassendi found them in absolute and undeviating contradiction.

The prophet foretold that Suffren would wear a long curling beard: he was always close shaven. That his teeth would be black and irregular: they were white, sound, and even. That, in old age, he would be bent double: he went, straight, to his grave. That, at nineteen, he would inherit an unexpected fortune: he had none but what his father bequeathed him. That he would devote himself to occult philosophy, geometry, arithmetic, and eloquence: he studied nothing but jurisprudence, and knew but little of that. As a final confutation of the prophet's flattering views, this very aggravating "native" died just twenty-one years sooner than had been predicted for him!

The private and domestic character of many of Nostradamus's prophecies forbids any close verification. Something like this has been seen in our own time:

The brother of the sister, with a fained dissimulation,  
Shall mix dew with mineral,  
In a cake given to a slow old woman.  
She dieth tasting of. The deed shall be simple and country-like.

This, for all its idyllic ring, seems to have been a case of clumsy poisoning, the poor old lady being stigmatised as "slow," for not succumbing to the drug with all the expedition that had been expected of her. Hence, the "mineral" having failed, the result was accelerated by a poisoned cake.

Obscurity is the soul of this description of prophecy; and here, to conclude, is a triad of "teasers":

A dukedom shall be committed against Oinde,  
Of Saulne and St. Aubin and Beleuvre,  
To pave with marble and of towers weil-picht  
Not Bletetan to resist, and masterpiece.

If that be of doubtful purport, what of this?

The natural to so high, high not low,  
Late return shall make the sad contented;  
The Reclouing shall not be without strife  
In employing and loosing all his time.

Of which a commentator disposes, with the supplementary prediction that no learned clerk shall ever penetrate its meaning.

Finally :

Religion of the name of seas shall come,  
Against the sett Adaluncatif;  
Obstinate sett deplorate shall be afraid  
Of the two wounded by Aleph and Aleph.

"I confess," says even M. Garencières, who has dared so much, "my ignorance in the intelligence of this stanza."

So do we.

### LITTLE TROUT.

TRESTWOOD-DARENTH was not originally an imposing structure, and how or when it acquired the honour of a double name was never satisfactorily ascertained. The title, nevertheless, subsisted, and so did the family and descendants of the first proprietor, until nine generations of Blackacres, expending in succession the surplus of their improving means in enlarging the mansion, that building attained at last its present dimensions and somewhat composite appearance, bearing, as it does, the aspect of a pinched palace, to which have been successively added a poor-house, a riding-school, and a private lunatic asylum.

To give but a faint idea of the ins and outs, ups and downs, turns and bends, of this remarkable residence, would occupy a summer's day. If the inhabitants themselves were sometimes at fault in working their way from one end to the other, strangers had indeed to take heed to their steps. The general difficulties of the place were increased by the fact of no two apartments being precisely on the same level with each other, or with their relative approaches—a want of harmony that had occasioned more than one mishap through persons failing to remember that they had to ascend two steps into a bedroom, or jump down twice that number to dinner.

Every prudent guest—and guests were numerous under the roof of the hospitable Blackacres—provided himself at once with a careful plan of the house, in which was marked off every snare and pitfall, with especial warnings against seductive entries, which, promising boudoir or billiard-room, landed you in the butler's pantry, or even the coal-cellar.

With the external domain of Trestwood-Darenth we have little or nothing to do. The romance of our story—and a singular one it is—will be confined within the walls. It may, however, be incidentally mentioned that the estate included a finely wooded park, and more than one prosperous farm, whose extent and revenue were equal to those of many a property that exalts its owners to the rank of "county people."

Mr. and Mrs. Blackacre, four daughters, and three sons, a governess, and, upon an average, fourteen guests, formed the party that usually assembled at Trestwood-Darenth, and pretty well filled that commodious but intricate mansion. The master of the house strongly objected to sitting down less than twenty to dinner, and, as it frequently chanced that one

or more of his children were absent, it was his wont to guard against any diminution of the favourite number, by keeping his visiting contingent well up to the mark.

Hence, it would occasionally come to pass that the last-named element overflowed, and, washing Charley Blackacre (the youngest) out of his accustomed chamber, compelled him to take refuge in a room on the ground floor, opening, in fact, upon the hall, which, partaking of the mingled character of the house at large, was two-fifths library, one gun-room, one chamber, and the remainder what you please. The chamber portion consisted of a camp-bed and washing-stand, and, with these, Charley had passed many a contented night, often, inspired perhaps by the sporting implements around him, rising with the dawn, and bringing home a creelful of dancing, crimson-speckled trout for the matin meal.

It was more than suspected that another motive—nothing less than filial affection—incited Charley to these expeditions. He doted upon his father, firmly believing him to be the wisest sage, the truest patriot, the most sagacious statesman, the most brilliant wit, that ever preferred the privacy of domestic life to the honour and renown that must otherwise have been thrust upon him. It was a sweet, honest faith, and a pleasing. Sad is it to dissent from anything that has a root so commendable. Truth, however, must be told, and the bare fact is, that, unless an addiction to jokes of the minuter kind be an evidence of superior mental endowments, good kind Mr. Blackacre was not above, if indeed he was equal to, the ordinary run of men.

Charles never missed, nor failed to applaud, his father's jokes. He would as soon have omitted to greet his sovereign at the third encounter, because he had taken off his hat to her twice before. The new jests he hailed with bursts of glee, the old he relished with a calm enjoyment, as one might sip and toy with wine of an approved and mellow vintage. And it was for one of these latter, besides for trout, that Charley went a-fishing.

He knew that when Binns the butler ostentatiously placed those fish on the table, with a glance that sufficiently indicated whose skill had provided them, his father would infallibly remark :

"Ha, ma'amselle ! more of your kinsmen ?" and therewith select the most delicate for Made-moiselle Trautchen Pfalz, the little German governess.

(Linguists will forgive the explanation that "Trautchen," little trout, is a corruption of Trudchen, short, with diminutive added, for Gertrude.)

"Ha, ha, ha ! Good, sir, good !" shouted the faithful Charley, with the keen enjoyment of a sportsman who has bagged his "stalk."

Little Trout was such a very minnow that she might have held the post of governess to Hop o' my Thumb. She had small set features, and a cloud of dusky hair, which it was her will to confine within a lurid crimson fillet, forming



the frontier line between brow and hair, and imparting a Medea-like expression to the little stern sweet face below. In this fillet was supposed to reside the power she undoubtedly possessed, of awe-striking her pupils with a single silent turn of the head! Before this movement, passion froze, contumacy ceased, argument became dumb. Mademoiselle was never known to colour. When vexed, she bit her lip. When pleased, her blue eyes widened and brightened, as when one turns up a reading-lamp. When angry, her pale cheek and forehead grew white as alabaster, throwing out the crimson fillet in such relief, that it seemed as if all the angry blood in her veins had concentrated in that glowing circlet as in a citadel.

As for the look, heretofore described, the master of the house himself had been known to turn pale and shrink before it, the half-born jest expiring on his tongue. Charley alone defied it, but he was a youth who knew not the sensation called fear, and hence perhaps it was, that, on crowded occasions, he was, by general consent, voted into the occupation of the apartment already mentioned, which was, in a moderate, unobtrusive manner, to an ascertained degree, and without prejudice to the possibility of passing very comfortable nights there—haunted.

"Here's a pretty business!" said Mr. Blackacre, one morning, coming into his wife's dressing-room with an open letter in his hand. "My aunt Macrory will be here to-day."

"To-day? No, dear, Saturday."

"'To-morrow,' I take it, means 'to-day,'" replied her husband, with a dim consciousness that the retort might have taken rank as a joke, had Charley only been present to witness to its character. Unfortunately, he had gone away that morning on a visit.

"Aunt has had a kick-up with Lady Caruthers. Some bosh about cold slops," continued Mr. Blackacre, in that informal phraseology not uncommon, I have been told, in the privacy of conjugal discourse. "That fine minx of hers—Meggs—Moggs—what's her name?—I take it, has been troublesome again. Always in hot water, and—"

"This is about *cold*!" put in his wife.

Mr. Blackacre frowned, and bit his lip. His wife had snipped off the nascent jest.

"There has been a jolly row," he resumed, gloomily, but controlling himself. "Miss Matilda Moggs complained that she got her tea too late, and cold. Aunt remonstrated with housekeeper. Housekeeper flared up, and set fire to her mistress. General action. Mrs. Macrory withdrew from the field, carrying off her wounded (Moggs), and will be here in the course of the day. Now, where can you put her?"

Mrs. Blackacre pondered. Mrs. Macrory was particular. So was her maid.

"There is literally nothing but the hall-room."

"As well offer her the ball-room!" chuckled her husband.

"Even Charley's room is occupied. Somebody *must* change into the hall-room," said the lady, decidedly.

"Whoever you select for that transforma-

tion, my dear," remarked her spouse, "don't let it be my little Popsy." In which appeal he referred to his youngest daughter, whose name (as will have been easily comprehended) was Araminta.

At this moment entered a stream of young ladies—three—and the governess.

"A volunteer for the Chamber Perilous!" shouted Mr. Blackacre, waving his aunt's letter like a standard. "Hurrah! Don't all speak at once!"

They didn't. On the contrary, there ensued a depressing silence of some seconds, after which, one voice, very sweet and decided, remarked quietly:

"I will sleep there."

"*You* will do no such thing, ma'amselle," replied the master of the house. "It would be an indelible stain on the courage of my race, were we to be indebted to a young and tender stranger—"

"I am not tender, sir," said Little Trout.

"—For a service not one of ourselves had the courage to perform," continued Mr. Blackacre. "Connie, my brave child, *you* shall sleep below."

Miss Constance responded with a burst of tears.

"I prohibit *that*," said Little Trout.

"You pro—I beg your pardon, ma'am?" said Mr. Blackacre, somewhat loftily.

Mademoiselle Trautchen slowly turned, and looked at him. The blood-red fillet seemed to catch and imprison his eye. Mr. Blackacre winked, blinked, fidgeted, finally muttered, in a confused manner, that if his wife consented to the—saw no—that sort of thing—he—that is, she—in short, mademoiselle would do as she pleased. Upon this, Little Trout slightly smiled.

Mrs. Blackacre was too happy to avail herself of the voluntary proposal, and lost no time in giving orders that the apartment should be made as comfortable as its composite character permitted. This done, the council broke up, and went to breakfast.

The day passed as merrily as usual. Mrs. Macrory, with plumes yet ruffled, arrived in due course, was installed in mademoiselle's pleasant chamber, condoled with, and given tea. As dusk approached, those who were in the secret of the change of rooms, fancied that Little Trout's inscrutable face for once exhibited a shade of uneasiness. It was probably nothing more than the craven suggestion of their own repugnance to the task *she* had undertaken. In *her* there was really no symptom of vacillation; and, when the hour of retiring arrived, you might have supposed Little Trout was about to accompany a party of friends to some agreeable entertainment, got up for their amusement.

A few friends did accompany her as far as the door. There, for the present, intercourse ceased. Abrupt, yet cordial, leaves were taken, and the escort, separating, repaired to their cheerful rooms above.

Little Trout sent a careless but not incurious glance round the apartment. It exhibited a perfect museum of guns, foils, fishing-tackle,

hunting and other whips, bows, both cross and long, cloaks, gloves, hats, and a multitude of those familiar but indescribable articles known as odds and ends.

Twenty ghosts might with ease have lain concealed in such a room, and, search being out of the question, the dark panelling and other gloomy objects utterly devouring the light of her chamber-lamp, Little Trout simply looked to the fastenings of her door and windows, undressed, and went to bed. There she lay for some time, listening to and speculating dreamily upon those singular creaks, cracks, groans, squeaks, and rumbles, by which most venerable mansions inform the silent night that their constitutions are beginning to feel the touch of time. The disturbance was presently increased by the circumstance of a rat, who appeared to be held in great social esteem, giving a party, which, after much conviviality, ended in a general fight. Hence it was past two before Little Trout's blue eyes consented to slumber.

A cry! a shot!—two shots, in angry succession! Trestwood-Darenth leaped to its feet. Doors banged. Lights flashed. Half-dressed people peeped over the banisters, and coughed in the sulphurous haze, as the smoke still went curling up. Little Trout, in her grey dressing-gown, looking white as winter, but otherwise unappalled, stood in front of her chamber door, a pace or two within the hall, grasping, in her still extended hand, a discharged pistol. The shutters and sash of one of the hall windows were open, admitting the moonlight. Some of the furniture was in confusion, and on the marble floor were drops and patches of blood, clearly showing that the intruders had not escaped scot-free.

Mademoiselle's story was soon told. She had been aroused by a low grating sound at the window of her room. It had a purpose and persistence about it, easily distinguishable from the wainscot noises to which she had been listening before, and, when it suddenly ceased, to be renewed, the next minute, at a more distant window, Little Trout at once concluded that the proper time had arrived for interference.

It was not, however, her intention to disturb the sleeping household. Any indication of watchfulness within, would suffice to hinder the attempt. She therefore took a pistol from the wall, charged it hastily from the materials on the table, and opening her door softly, crept into the hall. She was too late. A tall man, with woollen socks drawn over his boots, and a dark lantern in his hand, was crossing the hall towards the butler's pantry and plate closet. A second man, a thickset, powerful fellow, had just leaped upon the floor, and catching sight of Trautchen, muttered a low execration, and made towards her, his comrade turning at the same moment.

As the first man raised his arm, as if to grasp her, Trautchen touched the trigger. There was a guttural cry—a hurtling rush. She knew no more.

Blood-marks near the window, upon the very sill, seemed to indicate that the ruffians, wounded

and unwounded, had escaped by the way they came, while the tramping of differently-sized feet on the soft mould, led the searchers to conclude that the band repulsed by Little Trout consisted of at least three.

Great were the congratulations, manifold the compliments, lavished on the gallant little lady. Mr. Blackacre was profuse in commendation of the defender of his plate cupboard, and old General Dacre, a guest in the house, vowed he would present a beautiful case of pistols to the hand that knew so well how to use them. Mrs. Blackacre insisted that a bed should be prepared for mademoiselle in her own dressing-room, there being, of course, every likelihood of a renewal of the attempt before morning. But this proposal mademoiselle negated with her crimson fillet, and was allowed to reoccupy her chamber, escorted to the threshold by a company as numerous as, though less elaborately attired than, before.

This incident, as may be supposed, created no small excitement, the attempt to rob a house like Trestwood-Darenth, crowded, as it was generally known to be, with guests and servants, appearing audacious in the extreme. No clue, however, was obtained that might lead to the apprehension of the gang, and things resumed their usual course, unless we may except the circumstance that Little Trout, who had hitherto been rather respected than loved by the master and mistress, seemed to have taken a sudden leap into the affections of both. There followed a corresponding mollification in the tone and bearing of that independent young lady herself—a change all the more engaging, since you might as well have expected the Duke of Wellington to descend from his bronze Copenhagen to do homage to a passing beadle, as Mademoiselle Pfalz to court the good graces of any living thing.

"Who practises the accordion—sweetly, I must own—at two in the morning?" inquired General Dacre, one day, at breakfast.

"Ay—who is it?" said a chorus of voices.

Mrs. Blackacre had a confused recollection of a sweet melancholy peal of music mingling with her dreams, but could form no idea whence it came, no one then in the house having, so far as she was aware, any skill in the instrument named. It remained a mystery.

Another day or two elapsed, and the house had become so singularly bare of guests, that poor Mr. Blackacre had to sit down to dinner with a depressing little party of sixteen, when rumours, originating none knew exactly where, began to circulate in reference to unaccountable doings in and about the house. That active individual, who divides with the cat the responsibility of all the mischief of a household—Mr. Nobody—was engaged in the most extraordinary gambols. Not only was he heard disporting himself in the dead of night, but lamps were used, candles burned, provisions stolen, books and even clothes borrowed by this cool marauder. Cook, housekeeper, and butler were at their wits' end with terror and perplexity; and these had reached their climax, when one

morning, after a night's vigil within the walls, the gamekeeper requested an audience of his master, and declared his conviction that some person not belonging to the family or its guests—most probably one of the burglars' gang, whose retreat had been cut off—was actually secreted within the mansion!

Tom Ringwood's reasons for arriving at this alarming conclusion were never precisely known. They, at all events, satisfied his master, who, with much discretion, concealing the fact from all except his wife and eldest son, took instant measures with a view to the surprise and detection of the intruder.

It was arranged that, on the following day, two policemen, properly disguised, should be introduced into the house, and, accompanied by an house architect, make such an exhaustive scrutiny of its labyrinthine recesses, as should satisfy them that the visitor, by whatever means he obtained access, had no habitual hiding-place within the walls, at all events, without the connivance of one or other of the inhabitants.

The investigation, though laborious, produced no fruit beyond a vast amount of dust, and the rout and dissolution of a republic of spiders, who had flourished in peace and prosperity for at least a century. Sounding of panels, and measuring of walls and floors, revealed nothing more than extreme stability, and an aversion, almost monomaniacal, to level and uniformity. So convinced were those experienced officers that nothing had escaped their search, that they could not forbear congratulating Mr. Blackacre on his prompt adoption of the only effectual course; and so, handing over the mansion to renewed tranquillity, took their leave.

On the next morning, Mr. Binns, the butler, presented himself, with pale and anxious face, and reported that one of the vacant rooms—Mr. Charles's—had actually been "slep' in." Nor was this all. The daring occupant had absolutely turned out Mr. Charles's wardrobe on the floor, and, selecting a full shooting-suit and a pair of dress boots, had left, in their place, his own dirty leather-laced highlows, a pair of rough overalls, and a greasy hat.

All idea of keeping the secret vanished with this new discovery. In justice to his guests, Mr. Blackacre was constrained to announce, at the breakfast-table, that his castle was no longer entirely his own, and that, until this most incomprehensible annoyance had been fairly got rid of, he could not ensure his—at any other time most welcome—visitors, from the possibility of disturbance.

The hint was taken, and in a few hours the party at Trestwood-Darenth was, with the exception of one or two gentlemen who begged to remain and be made of use, reduced to the family themselves.

Poor Mr. Blackacre was much cast down at this compulsory dismissal of guests. Nothing in his cheerful, easy, genial life had ever annoyed him so much. He sat in his wife's boudoir, with his head on his hands, as if incapable of taking any decided step to shake off the incubus that oppressed him.

He had not been in his usual spirits for some days even before the occurrences narrated. He always missed his favourite son; and Charles, who was rarely absent many days, had been compelled to prolong his visit in the north, in order to be present at the marriage of a near connexion. He wrote, however, frequently, condoling with his father as to the strange disturbances, suggesting modes of inquiry, &c. When informed of the foray upon his own chamber, he wrote reassuringly, seeming rather tickled with the cool audacity of the perpetrator, but adding that he would instantly return, to aid in unearthing the fox, unless Mademoiselle Trautchen, whose fame in arms had reached the north, should forestal him.

The latter passage being quoted to mademoiselle, that warrior-maid smiled in a superior manner, and declared her intention of taking up her permanent night-quarters in the Chamber Perilous, as holding out the chance of another encounter with the marauder, who, *ma'amselle* flattered herself, had already had reason to respect her arm. Such influence had the little lady, by dint of her combined pluck and sweetness, gained by this time over the heads of the family, that neither of them thought of opposing her intention.

"Time was," observed Mr. Blackacre to his wife, when they were alone, "when I did not half like that little governess of yours. Of late, it really seems as if one could not get on without her. So gentle, so self-denying, so considerate. What a creature it is! Talk of Joans of Arc! Bosh! Tell me of Maids of Saragossa! Bah!"

"Her touch on the piano," began his wife—"Her touch on the trigger," chuckled Mr. Blackacre. And he sighed, for his wife did not laugh, and he missed the cheery rejoinder:

"Ha, ha, ha! Good, sir—good!"

"I don't know how it is, my dear," resumed the poor gentleman. "Perhaps it's the worry of this thing; but I fear I am growing dull and slow. My memory—wit, if you like it—some-what fails me. I find myself less quick, less happy in retort than formerly. The table does not roar when I have every right to expect it. Perhaps, when Charley returns, I shall pluck up again. His wit seems the touchstone, as it were, of mine."

"I think, my love, there is *one* who fully appreciates everything you say—*ma'amselle*. She rarely laughs; but I have often noticed her eyes twinkle and her lip curl at any clever remark of yours, just like dear Charley's," said Mrs. Blackacre.

"No; but have you?" cried her husband, brightening visibly. "She's a nice, good girl, as good as she is brave, and as clever as she is good. And I—I wish—well, no matter."

"What do you wish, my dear?"

Her husband looked at her, but did not reply.

Mrs. Blackacre smiled mysteriously.

"Shall I tell you a little secret, Henry?—Do you know that I think—I rather *think*—now, don't be vexed, my love—we can't help these things—that there has been, there was, in

short, there *is*, a little predilection, in a quarter that shall be nameless, in favour of a party I will not mention."

"I have not the slightest doubt of such a phenomenon existing, my dear," said Mr. Blackacre, laughing. "But where?"

"Frankly, then—Charley, and—and ma'am-selle."

"Ma'ams—"

"I am certain our boy loves her," continued his wife, hastily, "but he is so fond of *you*, dear, and has such a dread of your disapp—"

"Not another word, my love," said Mr. Blackacre, kissing her. "Let Charley come home. We will see."

Mademoiselle Trautchen was sitting in the schoolroom alone. If she were engaged in correcting the exercise of her youngest pupil, it was a curious process enough, for the slate was covered with large "Charleys," and little else. A soft tread startled her from her reverie; a soft matronly arm encircled her neck; and a voice, soft as either, whispered these two words:

"My daughter!"

Trautchen was weeping in her friend's arms. There was an alarm-cry that evening. Where was Little Trout? Dinner, tea, the evening, passed, without her. All her walking attire—hat, boots, parasol—the very crimson fillet, that so rarely left her brow—were found in her apartment. No trace of herself was to be discovered in the house, and no one had seen her without. A terrible surmise was started. Was it impossible that the brave but unfortunate young lady had encountered the concealed burglar, who had overpowered, perhaps murdered her, and dragged the body to his lurking-place?

The search, this time, was joined in with almost frantic zeal by every member of the household. Not a cranny was left unvisited. All, however, was in vain. No clue was to be obtained to the enigma; and, wearied with their exertions, and a prey to the most appalling apprehensions, Mr. and Mrs. Blackacre at length dismissed every one, and sat down, to rest and consult, in an apartment rarely visited on the upper floor.

"I shall turn over the place to Hatsey Young, the under-keeper," said Mr. Blackacre; "he's a sharp, bold fellow, and, in my opinion, worth twenty of your trained police. If anybody *can* rout out this mystery without pulling down the very house, *he's* the man."

"He's sharp and bold enough," observed his wife, "but, as to his honesty—?"

"Set a thief to catch a thief!" quoted Mr. Blackacre, with a mournful chuckle.

"Ha, ha, ha! Good, sir, goo—" shouted a strange, muffled voice, that seemed at once near and distant, and broke off with a gurgles, as if the speaker's mouth had been stopped by a hand.

Mr. Blackacre bounded from his chair, and again fell back into it. Well he might; for, high up in the wall, a panel, brickwork and all, swung outward without the slightest

noise, and revealed a recess, apparently of some size, and to which light seemed to be conveyed from the roof. A small flight of velvet-covered steps was let down in the same soundless manner, and by these descended Charley Blackacre, conducting, clad in a bridal dress and wreath, Little Trout!

"My wife, sir," said Charley, with a favourite's confident air, but not without feeling; "I am a bad, undutiful fellow, and have not a word to say for myself. I have been married three months, my dearest father, and never had the courage to risk the affection I value as much as my life, by confessing an act you might not approve, until my darling herself had won her way into your heart. *That*, we feared, might be a process too long for our patience, so we plotted a little alarm, though not by any means to the extent that happened."

"In my pretended forcible entrance—in which I was abetted by Hatsey Young—I cut my hand so severely, that my wife, after repulsing us in the gallant manner we had prearranged, implored me to remain, and declare the whole folly. I could not make up my mind to that, so adopted a middle course, and concealed myself in the house, under my wife's protection, until my hurt was cured, and our great end obtained. How I discovered that hiding-place I will explain at greater leisure. How often I have been nearly detected, how very short of provisions my wife kept me, how she cut off my cigars without mercy, and how she herself all but compromised the whole thing by insisting upon trying her accordion at two in the morning—also, how I managed my correspondence from cousin William's—these also you shall learn at your pleasure. Forgive us both, my dear father and mother—fools as we have been to mistrust you—and take this new child to your kind hearts."

"I—I cannot oppose your mother's wishes, sir," said Mr. Blackacre, trying with all his might to look like a rock, that, after much softening, had exhibited a minute fissure. "My dear, you will speak."

"*My* feelings must ever give way to *yours*, Henry," said Mrs. Blackacre, burning to embrace them both. "Since you command—"

But the stiffness was so translucent, that not one of the party could longer preserve their gravity. There was a roar!

"Well, my dear," said the stern father-in-law, wiping the tears of laughter from his eyes, "you are the first woman I have met with, who kept her husband in the cupboard among the spoons! Perhaps you thought it was but adding one to the number!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Charley, looking round exultingly. "Good, sir. Good!"

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